JOHNSON CITY PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Nation

FOUNDED 1865

Vol. CXLII NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 22, 1936 No. 3681

Contents

EDITORIAL PARAGRAPHS 85
EDITORIALS:
The Farmers' Fate 88
War Profits and Personal Devils 89
News from Red China 89
Socialists to the Left 90
ISSUES AND MEN. THE PRESIDENT'S DILEMMA. By Oswald Garrison Villard 91
CARTOON. By Fritz 92
THE AAA PUTS ON FALSE WHISKERS. By Paul W. Ward 93
THE LAST WAR AND THE NEXT. I. MORGAN, MONEY, AND WAR. By Walter Millis 95
SLUMBERING FIRES IN HARLEM. By Oswald Garrison Villard 99
WHAT REMAINS OF THE LEAGUE? By Harold J. Laski 102
LOOSE CONSTRUCTION. By Heywood Broun 103
CORRESPONDENCE 104
CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE 104
LABOR AND INDUSTRY:
The San Francisco Waterfront. By Oliver Carlson 105
An Open Letter to Rex Tugwell. By Tom Burke 106
BOOKS AND DRAMA:
Sweet Swan of Hollywood. By Joseph Wood Krutch 107
Salvemini on Seldes. By Gaetano Salvemini 108
Wilson and Neutrality. By Sidney B. Fay 109
Hokusai. By Benjamin Rowland, Jr. 110
A Dedicated Man. By Mark Van Doren 111
Drama: Necktie Party. By Joseph Wood Krutch 112

BOARD OF EDITORS

FREDA KIRCHWEY JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

MAX LERNER

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

MARGARET MARSHALL MAXWELL S. STEWART

DOROTHY VAN DOREN

OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

SUBSCRIPTION RATES—DOMESTIC: One Year $5; Two Years $8; Three years $11. CANADIAN: 50 cents a year additional. FOREIGN: $1 a year additional.

THREE WEEKS' NOTICE AND THE OLD ADDRESS AS WELL AS THE NEW ARE REQUIRED FOR CHANGE OF SUBSCRIBER'S ADDRESS.

THE NATION. Published weekly at 20 Vesey St., New York. Entered as second class matter December 13, 1897, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., and under the Act of March 3, 1879.

Copyright, 1935, by the Nation, Inc.

Muriel C. Gray, Advertising Manager. Walter F. Grueninger, Circulation Manager. Cable Address: Nation, New York.

THE SUPREME COURT RULINGS last Monday were less dramatic and drastic than the AAA cataclysm of the week before. All that happened was that some $200,000,000 in processing taxes that had been impounded in the lower federal courts awaiting a ruling on the AAA were ordered returned to the processors. The decision, given in the case of the rice millers, was unanimous and indeed inevitable. For after the AAA ruling even the dissenting justices in the Butler case had to treat the majority decision as binding. The court expressly avoided passing on the validity of the provision in the 1935 amended act which made tax refunds conditional upon proof that the processors had not passed the tax on to the consumers. The rice millers' case was not an instance of tax refund, since the tax had been protested and had never been legally paid. The problem of what will happen to the billion dollars, approximately, of processing taxes that has already been collected still remains to be determined. The decision raises serious revenue difficulties for the government. Money to replace the sums to be returned will have to be found somewhere. Especially will money have to be found if the government is to proceed with its plans for crop control through bounties for soil conservation. The distressing thing is that a precedent has now been set which puts a premium upon refusal to pay federal taxes and applying for injunctive relief on the chance that the Supreme Court will finally kill them. This is already being done with the Guffey act taxes. Carried far enough it will wreck any administrative program, no matter how sound its constitutionality may eventually be proved to be. If the new agricultural-bounty bill depends at all upon processing taxes, collapse would be probable even before the court ruling was given.

SOME CONSOLATION is to be found in the refusal of the court in the Lee Moor case to pass on the Bankhead act on the ground that no actual damage had been shown by the plaintiff in the lower court. We try to extract comfort from it, not because of any inherent merit in the act itself, but because of the hope the decision offers that the suit against the constitutionality of the TVA may also be thrown out on jurisdictional grounds. The government argument in the TVA case urged that a suit in equity brought by a minority stockholder could not be entertained unless fraud was involved in the original contract. If the court shows a disposition to apply such procedural limitations rigorously, the TVA may for the present be saved. Given the present temper of the court, however, this may very likely turn out to be only wishful thinking.

CONGRESS has set aside such problems as neutrality, agricultural policy, and the budget in order to devote itself to the politically more pressing matter of passing the soldiers' bonus. On at least two previous occasions the bonus has been passed by Congress only to be killed by a Presidential veto, but this time—especially since it happens to be an election year—some measure seems almost certain to be enacted. In contrast to last year, when the veterans themselves were divided on the type of legislation desired, the bill which passed the House by 356 to 59 carried the indorsement of all three of the chief veterans' organizations. It also lacks the inflationary features of the Patman bill, which was vetoed by the President last year. Meanwhile, however, whatever argument existed a few years ago for passing the bonus on the ground of distributing purchasing power has disappeared. Recovery may be halting and unsatisfactory, but the deflationary cycle has definitely been checked, and the chief danger at the moment lies in rising living costs and the threat of inflation. Nor is there any other excuse for prepayment of the veterans' adjusted-service certificates. Many veterans are doubtless in need, but the money poured into a soldiers' bonus bill could be used to better effect for a more adequate relief program. The President's admirable veto message of last summer will probably not be repeated. He may continue to oppose immediate payment in full, and thus gain the reputation of guardian of the national treasury, but the chances are that he will sign a compromise measure that will grant the veterans only slightly less than their full demands. Getting votes to the tune of $1,000 each seems to us to be a bit extravagant—particularly when so much needed legislation is precluded on the ground of economy.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MONEY IS NEWS. Thus, although there is some doubt about the legality of publishing the names of persons paid a salary of more than $15,000, the newspapers rushed into print with several columns of such names, and it is reasonable to believe that a good many persons perused the lists with avidity. With the welfare of our readers always in mind, we have prepared a few statistics on the basis of these salaries, to guide them in their choice of future occupation. The highest-paid profession is—you never would have guessed it—journalism! Beginning with Mr. Hearst, who pays himself a modest annual stipend of $500,000, and stepping somewhat rapidly down to Mr. Arthur Brisbane, whose boss rewards him with slightly more than half his own pay, or $265,000, we discover that five jobs on the *Daily News* (New York) pay more than $100,000 each. By comparison, the railroad business is terrible. Daniel Willard of the Baltimore and Ohio and General Atterbury of the Pennsylvania draw a mere $60,000 a year each. Nor is the utilities business booming. Mr. Cortelyou of Consolidated Gas gets only $95,000; Mr. Thomas N. McCarter, president of the Public Service Corporation of New Jersey, has to struggle along on $75,000. The five-and-ten-cent stores, however, do nicely by their upper employees; the president of F. W. Woolworth and Company was paid $337,479. But Mae West, bless her heart and hooray for the arts, got $2,000 more than that, and the combined salaries of Constance Bennett, Charlie Chaplin, Gary Cooper, Marlene Dietrich, W. C. Fields, and Sylvia Sidney amount to the tidy sum of $869,521, unless our addition is at fault, which is more than likely. In short, the published salaries lead us to conclude that there is not much use raising your boy to be a banker (average pay something like $60,000) or the president of a life-insurance company (with a $150,000 top), but that the silver screen is gold plated and the printed word brings in the money. Even Walter Winchell was paid $1,000 a week. Could any little boy or girl do less?

MIGUEL MARINO GOMEZ has been chosen President of Cuba in the first regular election to be held since the overthrow of Machado. The fact that the polling was unusually quiet—only five persons having been killed—is ascribed to the presence of women, who were exercising the right of suffrage for the first time. To assume from these facts, however, that conditions are gradually becoming more settled in Cuba would be wholly unwarranted. The military terror of Batista prevented any of the powerful revolutionary parties from participating in the election. Choice was limited to General Menocal, a former President, and Gomez, who had previously been Mayor of Havana. The political position of the two men was almost identical. Both are extremely conservative, and both were considered "friendly" to the United States. Only a small fraction of the Cuban electorate participated in the voting. Dr. Ramon Grau San Martin, the only Cuban President in recent years to possess genuine popular support, is still in exile at Miami. More than 3,000 members of the opposition parties are in prison, and political assassinations are almost a daily occurrence. Every opposition newspaper has been forcibly suppressed, and radio stations belonging to the opposition have been seized by the army. This terror would collapse if the present military dictatorship in Cuba were not condoned by the two key men in the situation—Ambassador Caffery and ex-Ambassador Welles, who as Assistant Secretary of State is in charge of Cuban affairs at the State Department. Their continuance in their posts casts strong doubt on the sincerity of the Roosevelt Administration's intention to be a genuine "good neighbor" to Cuba.

AFTER SEVERAL DAYS of uncertainty the Japanese have decided to abandon their farcical role at the London Naval Conference. From the beginning it was obvious that the Japanese delegation's demand for a "common upper limit" was being pushed, not with any hope of success, but as a means of "gaining face" with the home population. When it became apparent that the conference would refuse to discuss the matter further, the delegation was in something of a dilemma. To consent to a consideration of such details as the voluntary submission of naval building plans, the restriction of submarine operations, or qualitative limitation in the size and armament of the various types of warships would imply a surrender of the issue of parity. This the Japanese naval leaders would not tolerate. The Tokyo government, on the other hand, did not wish to lay itself open to the charge of having wrecked the conference. A severe struggle between the naval and civilian elements appears to have ensued in which the naval group emerged victorious. The Japanese delegation is remaining in London only long enough to restate the case for parity, after which it will withdraw, possibly leaving an observer. Just why the conference will continue when there is no hope of naval restriction no one seems to know, unless it is that the delegates are afraid to face the home folks with empty hands.

THE REPORT of the Federal Trade Commission on the natural-gas industry reveals a story of avoidance by holding companies of state regulation, elimination of competition, raising of rates, and write-ups of capital assets that would make an electric-utility magnate blush. It contains also one of the most serious charges that have been leveled against big business. Coal, oil, and other utility interests, the commission charges, have conspired to choke off the supply of natural gas to New York and Philadelphia. Only 100 miles of additional pipe line would be required to complete "one remarkable loop system from which to supply natural gas to the greatest industrial and most densely populated area in the United States. Yet so far as is known, these lines have been lying practically idle for years, with only insignificant sales to a few small communities on the way and to gas utilities in Washington, D. C." The Associated Press story of the report declares that the system belongs to the Columbia Gas and Electric Corporation and the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey, and this is borne out by the pipeline map in Moody's investment manual. Ownership of the vast network that leads "into this tremendous potential market," the commission says, "makes possible an extraordinarily reliable natural-gas service, yet no service in any way commensurate with that investment has been developed." The report continues:

> One may well question why great organizations in business for profit can be constrained from acquiring business at hand amply sufficient to load their now idle lines and utilize idle and possibly wasting gas production (through extraction by other ownership), whereby they stand a chance of earning some return on the many millions of dollars repre-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sented by these hundreds of miles of pipe lines and the many thousands of acres of gas lands held in reserve to support them. . . . Are these pipe-line facilities left idle because the other utility interests controlling distribution of manufactured gas, and possibly powerful interests concerned with the distribution of coal and oil in those areas, exert financial pressure and otherwise on the owners of the pipe lines to delay or avoid seeking business for natural gas?

We should like to know why the commission has not answered these questions itself, and why the New York *Herald Tribune* published only the generalized conclusions of the commission on the industry as a whole and the New York *Times* published nothing on the report at all.

AFTER FOUR HOURS of heated arguments the Association of the Bar of the City of New York voted, 321 to 247, to adopt a resolution opposing the appointment of Lamar Hardy as United States Attorney. The resolution declared Mr. Hardy unqualified for the position to which President Roosevelt appointed him last November, by reason of his connection with the State Title and Mortgage Company, condemned for maladministration by the Moreland Commission. The Bar Association's decision is altogether commendable, and it should have weight with the United States Senate when the Hardy appointment comes up for discussion. It will be an impressive addition to the argument that confirmation should be refused. At the lawyers' meeting, however, Mr. Hardy did not want for champions. Among those who supported him were former Governor Nathan I. Miller, Bainbridge Colby, George Gordon Battle, S. Stanwood Menken, and Frederic Coudert, Sr. Two former presidents of the Bar Association spoke in favor of the resolution and against Mr. Hardy's appointment; they were Charles S. Burlingham and Thomas D. Thacher. Samuel Seabury joined them. Despite the Bar Association's vote, however, one should not be too sanguine. A news story in the New York *Herald Tribune* for January 3 explained that not only were the dispensers of Democratic patronage aware of Mr. Hardy's connection with the mortgage company, but Attorney General Cummings had "made a thorough investigation" and convinced himself of Mr. Hardy's fitness.

AS SOON AS the first pressure of business is out of the way, Congress may be expected to take up the question of saving the country from the reds. The two bills most immediately on the docket are the Kramer sedition bill, reported favorably to the House by the Judiciary Committee in the last session, and the Tydings "incitement to disaffection" bill, which slipped through the Senate last June and was approved by the House Committee on Military Affairs. The Kramer bill provides for imprisonment of not more than five years or a fine of not more than $5,000, or both, for anyone who "knowingly and wilfully" advocates the overthrow of the government of the United States by force or violence; the Tydings bill imposes a fine of not more than $2,000 and imprisonment for not more than two years for anyone who "with the intent to incite disaffection" advises, counsels, urges, or solicits any member of the army or navy to disobey military laws or regulations. Both bills are dangerous and wholly unnecessary; both, if they are passed, will be susceptible of use against honest criticism and protest, particularly in labor struggles and in the activities of minority parties; both should be fought by every person who believes in free speech and a free press. So far we have no federal law on the statute books which limits American liberties in this manner. It is unlikely that Americans will now tolerate a beginning.

TWO SHOTS have been fired at the phalanx of teachers' loyalty oaths which have been marching through the state legislatures. In Massachusetts on January 11 the Council of Teachers' Unions sponsored the introduction by Representative Baker of a bill to repeal the act requiring teachers to swear loyalty to the Constitution. The bill was supported by the State Federation of Labor, among other groups. In Albany, early in the current legislative session, Assemblyman George Kaminsky of Brooklyn introduced a similar bill for repeal of the Ives loyalty-oath law. This proposal has the support of the Teachers' Union, the Teachers' Guild, and a few other teacher groups. Commendation is due to Mayor LaGuardia for his veto of the ordinance requiring that an American flag "thirty-six by forty-eight inches in area" be displayed at every meeting at which "the discussion of politics or public questions" takes place. These enactments which establish patriotism by legislative fiat would be downright silly if they were not potentially so dangerous. An important step in establishing a standing body to fight them has been taken by the Massachusetts teachers. They have organized the Massachusetts Society for Freedom in Teaching, headed by Professor Kirtley Mather of Harvard and including on its executive council men of distinction like Samuel E. Morison of Harvard, Henry R. Mussey of Wellesley, and Harold U. Faulkner of Smith. Teachers in other states would do well to follow the example thus set. The deeply rooted tradition of academic freedom in America may prove to be one of the principal elements that will distinguish our fate from that of Italy and Germany.

THE CONFERENCE of the American League Against War and Fascism, which met in Cleveland during the first week of January, represented a broader constituency and many more persons than earlier anti-war congresses. Careful estimates were offered to show that the 2,200-odd delegates could speak for nearly 2,000,000 persons. There were three or four times as many representatives of the trade unions, many of them being A. F. of L. locals; the farm representation had grown enormously; and that of cultural groups had likewise increased. In general the congress was distinguished by a real spirit of unity and a democratic attempt to formulate a program according to the wishes of all the delegates. The ten-point program adopted was strongly anti-militaristic and anti-fascist, as was to be expected, ending with an appeal "to organize mass support for every effort, national or international, which in our judgment is directed toward postponing, restricting, or shortening war." In addition it called for vigorous championship of American civil rights and opposition to "all legislation . . . denying citizens in the armed forces their constitutional right to receive printed matter . . . in behalf of this or any other program designed to secure peace, freedom, and justice." The usual opposition from the Hearst press, the American Legion, and the president of the American Federation of Labor was aroused, as was also to be expected. All in all, the meeting indicated an encouraging increase of anti-fascist feeling throughout the country.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Farmers' Fate

As a result of the Supreme Court's decision invalidating the AAA, the whole question of agricultural policy has once more been unceremoniously dumped into the lap of Congress. The Supreme Court does not even pretend to have been concerned with the plight of the farmer or the merits of the AAA as such. It merely asserted that the particular legal device which Congress had established to alleviate the farm crisis was unconstitutional, leaving the Administration with the responsibility for drafting new legislation to conform with the technicalities of the law. That Congress will take some action goes without saying. For political, if not for humanitarian, reasons the farmers cannot be allowed to fall back into the poverty and insecurity of the pre-New Deal era—at least not in an election year.

The fact that we can find no legal or moral justification for the Supreme Court's action does not alter the fact that the AAA—taken as a whole—was a dangerous and anti-social program. Granting that drastic steps were necessary to save the farmers from utter destitution, there were many provisions in the act which were indefensible on any grounds. The processing tax, for example, was scarcely more than a glorified sales tax which bore most heavily on those least able to carry the load. The necessities used by the poor—bread, flour, lard, pork, sugar, tobacco, and cotton goods—were arbitrarily raised in price by 10 to 30 per cent in order to pay farmers to limit their output. Although it has been argued that the contraction in acreage was rendered necessary by the decline of foreign trade, a part of the restriction, at least, has been at the expense of American living standards. Owing to the combined effects of the drought and the AAA, pork and lard consumption dropped approximately 30 per cent in 1935, while restrictive policies for milk led to a decline of 5 per cent in the use of dairy products. In order to give the population of the United States an adequate diet, it is estimated that the area of cultivated land would have to be increased at least 40,000,000 acres over that of 1933; instead, more than 30,000,000 acres were withdrawn from production!

No one will deny that the restriction of acreage has contributed, among other factors, to the increase of agricultural prices and the expansion of farm income. But instead of regaining our foreign markets, the AAA policies have intensified the drift toward economic isolation, involving a permanent loss of export opportunities. Prior to the depression the United States regularly exported approximately one-half of its cotton, one-third of its lard, and one-fifth of its wheat. The artificially high price of American farm products has resulted in the loss of practically all of this market. In the first ten months of 1935 our exports of raw cotton amounted to only 3,800,000 bales as against 8,500,000 bales in 1928; our exports of lard were 80,500,000 pounds as contrasted with 760,000,000 pounds in 1928; while shipments of wheat declined from an average of 116,000,000 bushels in 1926-30 to approximately 200,000 bushels in 1935—a drop of 99.8 per cent. Faced with the loss of foreign outlets, farmers turned to the production of supplies for the home market until, as was recently the case with potatoes, prices of these products also were driven to unprofitably low levels. Moreover, hundreds of thousands of the most underprivileged —tenants and share-croppers—have borne the brunt of the reduction program. And it could scarcely be otherwise. If foreign markets are permanently lost, our cities are faced with the choice of absorbing the surplus production of our farms or of finding some way to absorb the surplus farm population.

Secretary Wallace and other Administration leaders have recognized the legitimacy of many of these criticisms. But they insist that as long as the price of industrial products is maintained at an artificially high level through protective tariffs, there is no other means of obtaining a balanced economic structure. Some justification for this argument might exist if the processing tax under the AAA had been actually paid by the interests which profit by the tariff. Unfortunately this was not the case. Both the tariff and the tax were paid by the great masses of American consumers—factory and white-collar workers and farmers.

The agricultural-bounty plan proposed by the Administration to take the place of the invalidated AAA is discussed elsewhere in these pages by Paul Ward. It seeks to do under the form of soil conservation and reward for scientific management what the Administration has been forbidden to do under the taxing and spending power. This may be only a way of avoiding the uncomfortable constitutional problem in the present campaign and not a way of solving the farmers' problem. The farmers had been offered empty promises by the Republicans, but most of them felt that under Roosevelt they had finally found some substantial aid. Now they are to be abandoned to their fate. The Administration is willing to tide them over the campaign with promises of hand-outs through crop bounties, but it is unwilling to remove the principal obstacle in the way of a national attack on the problem—the power of the Supreme Court.

There may be a chance that the new plan will prove constitutional, although it is difficult to think so, given the present temper of the court. It is also true that a soil-conservation program has been badly needed. But a long-run program for the farmer must start with tariff reduction directed toward restoring agricultural parity. This will be difficult because no sustained effort has been made to educate the farmer and the city consumer on the amount which they pay each year as tribute to the industrialists under our outdated commercial policies. Meanwhile the agricultural worker, whether tenant, share-cropper, or owner, should be given the protection against insecurity which is planned for him in the Frazier-Lundeen workers' social-insurance bill. But basically neither tariff revision, soil conservation, nor social insurance meets the farmers' problem. That can be done only through a triple program of national control of industry bringing about a planned expansion of mass buying power, a reallocation of farm population so as to produce a balanced industrial-agrarian economy, and vigorous constitutional reform. Mr. Roosevelt may find that by abandoning the farmers to their fate he has made a political error. Nothing now stands in the way of their joining a third-party movement which will face their issues, and the issues of the workers, unflinchingly.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

War Profits and Personal Devils

THE Nye committee investigation of the part played by the House of Morgan in bringing on the war continues to furnish drama for millions of breakfast readers and a paradise for the historians. We all love to go behind the scenes of politics, especially if we can watch a banker manipulating the stage machinery. Backstage with Nye has become a favorite American diversion. "An Arrow-collar man with a leathery face" (in the newspaper description) has made what happened twenty years ago not merely history but contemporary politics. He has done as much as any man in driving home to American opinion the economic pressures that dictated the abandonment of neutrality in the last war. If this is essentially a Marxian position, let us Americanize it by calling it Arrow-collar Marxism.

What do the diggings and delvings of the committee add to our picture of the American road to war? In an article in this issue Walter Millis summarizes his own researches and adds to them the committee findings in a brilliant and balanced version of the economic interpretation of neutrality and war. Professor Sidney B. Fay, in a vigorous book review on a later page, takes the opposite point of view. He contends along with Professor Seymour that it was the submarine, rather than war profits, that was "the main and final cause of our participation." The issue is sharply drawn. There can be no doubt that the men of light and learning on Wall Street and in our universities will prefer to agree with Professors Seymour and Fay. If they can lay the burden on the submarine they can take it off the profiteers and the profit system, where it rests so heavily. For ourselves, we feel that Mr. Millis's point of view is the more convincing. It is not a question of economic determinism in the narrow sense, or of finding a single cause for our entrance into war. Submarine warfare, diplomacy, and international law undoubtedly furnished the framework; but the dynamic was furnished by the quest of American business for profits. It was the danger of cutting off our profits and prosperity that made the submarine issue so explosive and hampered President Wilson in applying adequate pressures to stop the war.

The Nye committee has rendered great service in verifying and publicizing this position. But there is danger in its attempt to establish a personal complicity of the Morgans in America's entrance into war. The very fact of their unquestioned leadership in finance gives them a stability and a sense of responsibility that few other American firms have. Like a magnet they attract all the profit filings that happen to be lying around. There is less need for them to engage in skulduggery than for weaker firms to do so.

The House of Morgan played a role in the zooming curve of war profits, but it was probably a stabilizing role rather than the reverse. When in the first years of the war the Allied purchasing agents began to invade the American shores, the boom in war profits began. The first effect of war is to throw foreign trade and finance into chaos, but now prosperity seemed assured. How false and insubstantial a prosperity it was, the post-war events were to show. But it was real enough at the time, real enough to dominate the entire sequence of diplomacy, propaganda, and international law. The scramble for war profits was increased by the competitive bidding of the various Allied purchasing agents. This competitive chaos was ended by the creation of a central purchasing agency under Morgan's Stettinius. That was followed by a central agency for financing the Allied purchases. It was natural that the House of Morgan should be intrusted with both. For they were almost fanatically pro-Ally, their traditions and their banking relations were English, and as the dominant bankers of the country their interests were tied in with the war profits of the business structure.

Thus analyzed, the onus for precipitating us into war falls not on the House of Morgan but on our whole business system, caught as it was in the obscene scramble for war profits. The most important function of the House of Morgan was not to generate pressures upon the government. It was not to bolster the pound-sterling exchange, "put the heat on" industrialists to invest in British loans, send clamorous cables—although on these points the Nye committee offers evidence that cannot be ignored. To see it only thus is to see the catastrophes of history in conspiratorial terms, and therefore to see the solutions of history in equally personal terms of breaking up the conspiracies. The real function of the House of Morgan was to register the pressures being exerted by the entire business system, to which the materials of death are as fair a source of profits as the materials of life.

If we do not take this tack there is danger that we shall waste our energy in a search for a personal devil. In the history of a nation the devils are not personal. They are institutional. The revocation of the "money embargo" by President Wilson and Secretary Lansing was not only the work of the banker interests. It was the imperative of the entire business community. We are certain that the Nye committee will not limit itself to a search for direct Morgan pressures in the interest of Morgan profits. Personal guilt is too slight a thread on which to hang the movement for a strenuous and unyielding American neutrality.

News from Red China

THE frank excuses given by Japan for its recent invasion of North China have at least had the advantage of breaking the conspiracy of silence in the American press regarding the progress of the Chinese Soviet armies since their dramatic westward movement of last winter. While fragmentary information has come out from time to time indicating that the Red Army had been far from weakened by the 1,500-mile journey, the correspondent of the New York *Times* apparently had to visit General Tada, commandant of the Japanese garrison at Tientsin, in order to learn the full extent of the Communists' progress during recent months. According to the General, who illustrated his remarks with maps containing huge red and pink splotches, Soviet districts are now to be found covering wide areas in six of China's eighteen provinces, and the number of men under arms is estimated to be over 200,000. Japan is now bringing pressure on Nanking to obtain agreement to a joint Sino-Japanese military drive against communism, which would open virtually the whole of China to Japanese troops.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The importance of the northward drive of the Red Army has probably been exaggerated by the Japanese because of their own ambitions in the adjacent areas of Inner Mongolia. Actually a comparatively small proportion of the Communist troops appears to be involved in the drive through Kansu and Shensi. According to recent detailed information published in the Soviet Union, the main Communist base is located in the northwestern portion of the rich, remote province of Szechuan. Although parts of this province have been under Soviet control for nearly two years, other large areas were taken over this summer when the main branch of the Red Army under Chu Teh and Mao Tse-tung arrived from Kiangsi. The union of these troops with the somewhat larger Szechuan army under Hsu Hsiang-chien was dangerous to Nanking, not only because of the unprecedented size of the combined force, but because it afforded an opportunity for a reorganization of the Red Army which has greatly added to its efficiency. The Szechuan forces, though consisting of more than 100,000 men, were notoriously weak in trained personnel, while the Kiangsi army, though not so large, contained tens of thousands of men who had received a thorough political and military training at their former base.

A further indication of the strength of the Communist movement in China may be obtained from the fact that much of the area evacuated by the Red Army a year ago is still under Soviet influence. In Kiangsi and Fukien, where the Soviets held uninterrupted sway for nearly six years, local partisan groups affiliated to the Communists still hold nearly one-third the territory supposedly occupied by Chiang Kai-shek, a region containing approximately 10,000,000 persons. In addition the Soviets have strong forces in Hunan and Hupeh —halfway between their old base in Kiangsi and their present stronghold in Szechuan. Here an army of 50,000 men under Ho Lung constitutes a perennial threat to Chiang Kai-shek's lines of communication, should he launch an attack on the main Red Army in the West. Other small Soviet areas are to be found in practically all of the provinces, bringing the total number of persons under Communist rule to nearly 50,000,000—or one-tenth the population of China.

After waging costly and unsuccessful war against the Soviets for nearly seven years, Chiang Kai-shek appears to have at least temporarily abandoned his campaign. That Japan should consider this a direct challenge to its ambitions is scarcely surprising. For the past four years the Communists have made political capital out of the fact that they have been practically alone in actively opposing Japanese aggression. For millions of Chinese, communism has come to be regarded as the sole alternative to Japanese domination. Now the situation has apparently got out of hand as far as either Nanking or Tokyo is concerned. The recent student uprising, at least partially Communist inspired, has revived much of the nationalist, anti-imperialist sentiment which has lain dormant since 1927. A mass revolt against the pro-Japanese policies of Nanking is a distinct possibility, a possibility that is greatly heightened by the existence of hundreds of red districts throughout China, backed by a well-disciplined army which with trained reserves may total as much as a half-million men. The new Communist tactics, emphasizing the necessity for forming a united people's government in opposition to both Chiang Kai-shek and Japan, would appear to be a far more potent factor in Far Eastern affairs than casual reading of our newspapers would suggest.

Socialists to the Left

THE fight within the Socialist Party reached a climax on January 5 when the National Executive Committee by a vote of eight to two deposed the conservative state committee of New York headed by Louis Waldman, suspended the charter of the state organization, and set up a temporary committee of fifteen to run its affairs pending an early election of party officers under the supervision of an N. E. C. committee of three and based on the membership of February 7. This resolution was substituted for an even more drastic one, submitted earlier, which would have condemned the New York organization, lifted its charter, and transferred it to the state organization set up at the Utica convention on the assumption that that convention represented a majority in the state membership.

The Old Guard charges that the procedure was unconstitutional. It charges, moreover, that the substitute resolution was not a compromise since eleven of the original "receivership" committee of fifteen were associated with the Utica convention. Later this committee was increased to twenty-one; so far six of its appointees and five alternates (all of them right-wing) have refused to serve. The deposed state committee, needless to say, has declined to accept the action of the N. E. C. The state committee elected at Utica, also needless to say, has accepted the arrangement; and the "militants" maintain that the Old Guard has grown suddenly tender of a constitution which it has not hesitated to violate in the past, that the plea of dictatorship and execution without trial is absurd since the issue has been hotly debated for months, and that the resolution as passed guarantees full party democracy.

The most intelligent and vigorous Socialist Party members and sympathizers must necessarily be on the left in this controversy for the simple reason that the Old Guard through its actions and policies long ago forfeited the right to be called Socialist. The fact that the radical Declaration of Principles was adopted at the national convention of 1934 by a two-thirds' vote indicates, moreover, that the left-wing has a majority of the membership on its side.

It is an unfortunate fact, however, that the right wing controls many of the institutions of the party and that it is strongly enough intrenched to make a nation-wide split highly probable. Mayor McLevy of Bridgeport has already denounced the action of the N. E. C., and James H. Maurer in Reading has taken the same stand. Mayor Hoan of Milwaukee prefers to remain aloof. He absented himself from the meeting in Philadelphia because he considered the situation hopeless from the point of view of harmony.

A split was inevitable, perhaps, in any case. If so, it is better that it should come as early as possible and on a clear issue. A realistic alignment of radical sentiment in this country is highly necessary. While the present struggle within the Socialist Party may mean a cut in the Socialist showing in the coming election, it will mean also more reality in the united front on the left, to which the Thomas group will give support. And at this stage in our political and economic development a genuine united resistance to the growing offensive against civil liberties and living standards—despite "recovery"—is of primary importance.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Issues and Men

The President's Dilemma

DESPITE the President's extraordinary political agility and his ability to avoid issues, it seems to me that Franklin Roosevelt is now in a place where he must come to a definite decision and that upon that decision will depend in good measure how high he will stand in American history. Will he give the country strong and effective leadership and a campaign for the amendment of the Constitution so that Congress may act freely for the social and economic welfare of the people, or will he take the decisions of the Supreme Court lying down and do nothing about them? It is hard to see how he can straddle on this issue. In his famous interview given after the Supreme Court's decision overthrowing the NRA, he declared that that august body was returning us to the "horse-and-buggy age." Then he shut up like an oyster, and I for one have been firmly of the opinion that he would not again refer to the question of a constitutional amendment until he was safely inaugurated for the second time. But now the situation has changed. Nearly all of the New Deal program appears doomed, and so there looms before the President one of the greatest opportunities for leadership that have ever come to any Chief Executive. If one may judge by the stump speech on the "state of the Union" which he delivered to Congress, he has about shot his bolt so far as new constructive measures are concerned which might help us to recover further and get our unemployed millions back to work. Will he now come out squarely for the limitation of the powers of the Supreme Court, or will he be content to campaign for reelection without further reference to the overthrowing of his legislative achievements?

The President can, of course, fight an effective battle for reelection on the basis of accomplishments other than those which the Supreme Court will have thrown out. He can truthfully declare that he has achieved a good deal; that he manfully stepped into the breach when the country was about to collapse in March, 1932. He can properly assume that his social-security act, the reform of the stock exchanges, and, perhaps, the control of security issues will remain unharmed. He can rightly claim that some of the reforms he has instituted will continue to be effective; I cannot conceive of any party hereafter advocating that old-age pensions, the care of prospective mothers, or social insurance be dropped. In other words, he can truthfully assert that he has given a new and a progressive orientation to our public life, and that that in itself is a great achievement. But if he really wants to make a slashing and effective attack upon the forces of reaction, he can best do it by raising the great question whether the time has not come for at least one more important amendment to the Constitution of the United States. Undoubtedly, if he chooses this course, the attacks which will be directed against him will be almost unparalleled, certainly unsurpassed, in their bitterness and violence. The big-business forces which he attacked in his message to Congress feel not only that the Supreme Court is their Gibraltar but that it is their last bulwark. He must not attempt the amendment unless he is ready to risk everything upon his program. In other words, he must be as ready to face defeat as Grover Cleveland was when he told a group of his advisers that he was going to campaign for reelection in 1888 upon a demand for radical reduction of tariffs. His advisers said to him, "Then you will be defeated"; and he replied, "Then I shall be defeated." And he was.

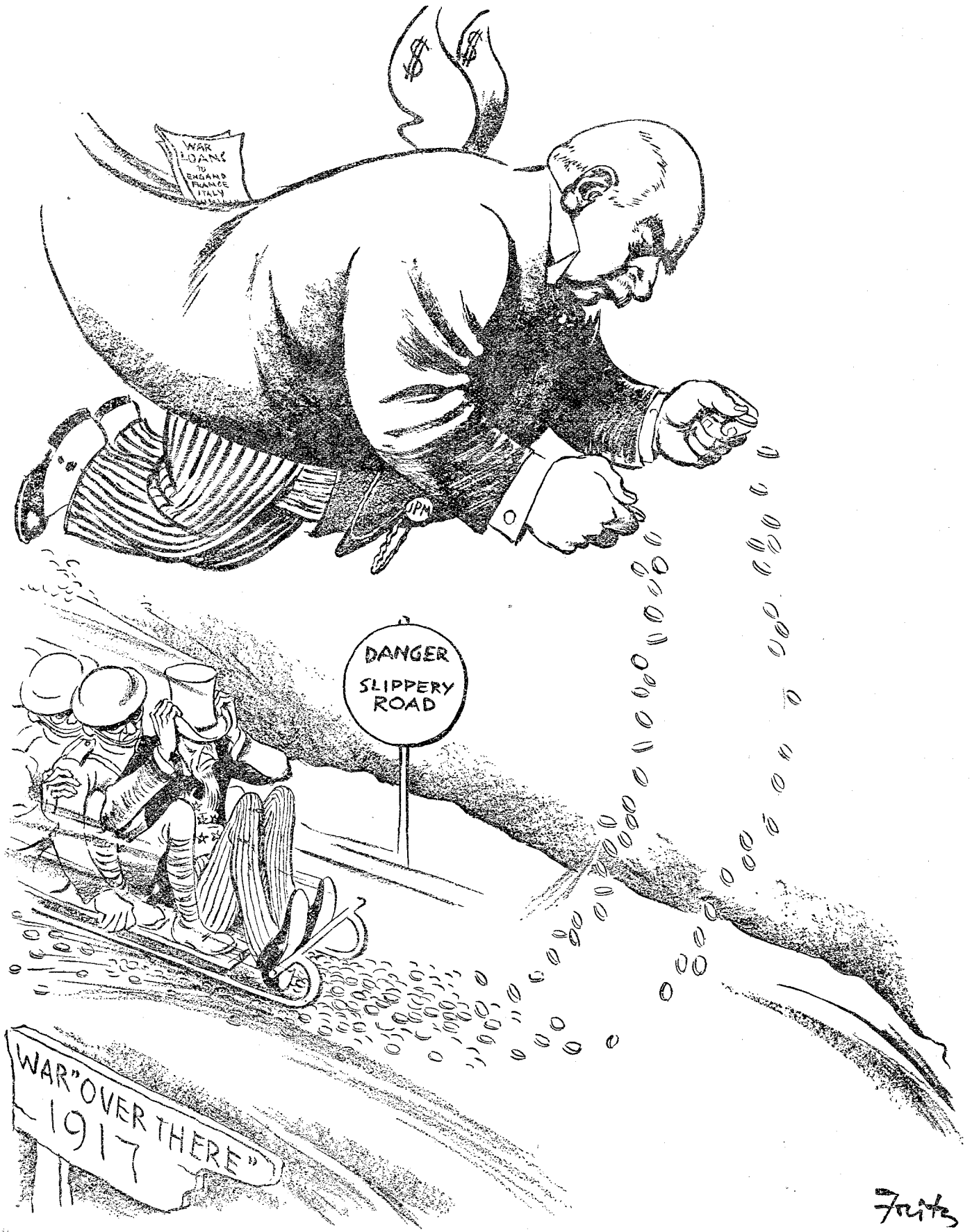
Unfortunately Mr. Roosevelt has given very little indication that there is in his make-up much of Grover Cleveland. Such a courage would call, for one thing, for the complete abandonment of politics. Speaking recently before the American Association for Labor Legislation, Dean Howard Lee McBain, of the graduate faculties of Columbia University, said that he realized "the hopelessness of any such proposal now to amend the Constitution." But it is not hopeless to think of the Constitution's being amended cautiously and wisely, provided only there is the right leadership. It is already reported that the American Federation of Labor and the National Agricultural Conference, the latter representing 2,500,000 farmers, will throw their influence on the side of amendment, but that will be of no avail, of course, if the President fails to take a stand and to carry his party with him. Dean McBain also declared that the President "in the midst of a national crisis giving him opportunities for reform never before possessed by a President . . . has chosen for personal and party interests to play the usual game of putrid party politics." There is the rub. Dean McBain feels that we need to alter the Constitution because "the traditional American economic system clearly shows that it is no longer capable of self-operation." Will the President take hold and eschew partisanship? Will he from now on give to his enemies and his friends alike a clear-cut, concise statement of what his aims are and just how he visualizes the future United States? That he has failed to do so has been one of the weaknesses of his Administration.

The first thing that the President would have to do would be to make it clear that the amendment that is proposed would in nowise alter our structure of government or our institutions. They certainly will not suffer if the right of the Supreme Court to *legislate* is curbed. As Justice Stone wrote in the minority decision in the AAA case, "Courts are not the only agency of government that must be assumed to have capacity to govern." Justice Stone also wrote that it must not be assumed that "the responsibility for the preservation of our institutions" is "the exclusive concern of any one of the three branches of government or that it alone can save them from destruction."

Well, Mr. President, which is it to be?

Oswald Garrison Villard

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The AAA Puts on False Whiskers

By PAUL W. WARD

Washington, January 12

UNDER the glowering gaze of the Supreme Court majority the Roosevelt Administration is preparing to reenact the AAA. The show was put into rehearsal by our White House Ziegfeld twenty-four hours after the court's AAA decision was announced, and it will be ready for the House and Senate stage in a few days.

It is a startling performance, but it is not a courageous one. In its every scene it gives the lie to Roosevelt's Jackson Day assertion that in the coming campaign "the basic issue will be inevitably the retention of popular government." It also belies his profession of belief that "it is the sacred duty of us who are vested with the responsibility of leadership to justify the expectations of the young men and women of the United States." And it reduces to absurdity his attempt to pose as a reincarnation of Andrew Jackson, for Old Hickory defied the Supreme Court. What Roosevelt is preparing is not defiance; it is humbug.

Because it illustrates all those things and because it offers, in addition, a classic example of how laws are made, we might as well follow the show through rehearsal. We begin by noting that its theme song is "Let's Put False Whiskers on the AAA"; that the opening chorus begins, "We gotta keep the farmers in checks till November at least"; and that six big-time corporation lawyers, sitting as justices of the United States Supreme Court, helped with the libretto.

If those six who signed the prevailing opinion in the Hoosac Mills case had been compelled to be candid they would have set forth their decision in some such words as these: "You gentlemen who framed the AAA succeeded in getting around the letter of the Constitution. If we conceded victory to you, one of the barriers the Founding Fathers erected against the development of truly democratic government in this country would be destroyed. So long as we six live and sit upon this bench, that barrier—the division of authority between state and federal government—will stand and democracy will be denied. We are bound, therefore, by hook or crook, to hold your law unconstitutional, and will so hold as to any similar law."

Those, at least, are the words that many in the AAA, the Department of Justice, and especially in Congress read into the majority decision, and on Capitol Hill there were a few who wanted to accept its implicit challenge and move to amend the Constitution. Some of them, to be sure, were actuated by fear, notably cotton-state Senators and Congressmen who thought some public show of bravado an essential bulwark to their reelection chances. But there were others, such as Senator Costigan of Colorado and Representative Marcantonio of New York, who were moved by principle. Nothing of that sort moved the President of the United States. The fear that gripped him and his political sycophants was a fear that the Supreme Court had destroyed the chief factor insuring his reelection. With the AAA outlawed, the Republicans, who almost confessedly had no competitive plank with which to match it, stood on nearly a par with him in bidding for the farm vote. What denied them complete parity was the fact that they never had made good on their quadrennial promises to the farmers, whereas the Democrats, under Roosevelt, to some extent at least had given performance to their pledges. That difference—slight or great—might be offset by the facts that the farm vote in important sections is normally Republican, that the AAA had benefited directly less than half of the 6,500,000 farmers, that a large proportion of the 3,000,000 contract signers were far from satisfied with their lot and had gone along with the program only for expediency's sake, and that in some parts of the country the AAA program was holding back a boom tide in order that other parts might not suffer.

That, of course, was only another way of saying that the New Deal had failed to accomplish any fundamental changes in the agricultural situation, just as it had failed to accomplish any fundamental changes in the industrial situation; that at best it had done nothing more than to implement agriculture with the chief anti-social device of manufacturing—production control; and that, in short, the Old Deal, to which Roosevelt had said this nation would never return, was just around the corner. Perhaps it might be stated more briefly by saying that, beneficent though the AAA was touted to be, it nevertheless could not command sufficient public support to warrant Roosevelt's risking his political fortunes by carrying the issue to the country.

But if the AAA were allowed to die, a number of things equally costly at the polls might happen. First, the farmer might get the idea that his White House messiah had abandoned him. Second, with the flow of benefit-payment checks stopped, there might be an apprehensive tightening of rural pursestrings, with a drop in automobile sales and with other consequences that would reverse the rising prosperity curve so essential to half of Roosevelt's campaign slogan: "I got you out of the depression and will keep you out of the war." Third, there might be—indeed, there probably would be—huge crops in corn, cotton, and tobacco which would send farm prices tobogganing to 1932 levels on election eve.

What, then, to do? Well, the only thing that occurred to Roosevelt and his advisers was to keep the AAA alive, partly by pretending that the Supreme Court had not meant what it said and partly by contriving a new disguise for this riches-through-scarcity device. The minority opinion, which up to this time had been revered because of its consoling qualities, was set aside and the majority opinion conned for loopholes. Down at the bottom of its sixteenth page the searchers finally found a paragraph that would support their pretense that the court was only joking. Justice Roberts in damning the AAA said: "We are not here concerned with a conditional appropriation of money, nor with a provision that if certain conditions are not complied with the appropriation shall no longer be available. . . . There is an obvious difference between a statute stating the conditions upon which money shall be expended and one

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

effective only upon assumption of a contractual obligation to submit to a regulation which otherwise could not be enforced."

Justice Stone in his dissenting opinion, with Justices Brandeis and Cardozo concurring, said that this paragraph meant: "The government may give seeds to farmers but not condition the gift upon their being planted in places where they are most needed or even planted at all. . . . It may spend its money for the suppression of the boll weevil but may not compensate the farmers for suspending the growth of cotton in the infected areas." But the Administration's legal experts said it meant quite a different thing. They said it meant that all the Administration had to do to keep the AAA alive was to do away with the AAA contracts. If Justices Stone, Cardozo, and Brandeis were right and they, the experts, were wrong, at least their mistake would not be discovered until after November, if then, for by a simple trick they had in readiness the Administration could make the new AAA immune from court attack. In Massachusetts *vs.* Mellon, they pointed out, the Supreme Court had held that a taxpayer could not ask the courts to invalidate a federal tax unless he could show that the tax injured him individually and specifically. If we finance the AAA out of general revenues, said the legal wizards, no man or corporation will be able to get a foothold in the courts from which to attack it and bring it to the Supreme Court's attention.

Roosevelt thought it all a good idea. So did the AAA and the Department of Justice. If there were any misgivings, they were felt only by the Treasury Department, whose chief, Budget-Balancer Morgenthau, must have shuddered at the expense involved.

There now arose the question of a disguise, for the White House did not dare appear publicly to be thumbing its nose at the august Six-and-Three. One was ready at hand. For several months a committee of experts in the Department of Agriculture had been working up a series of disguises in anticipation of an adverse decision from the Supreme Court. Secretary Wallace picked out a relatively honest one—a simple domino, let us say. But Administrator Davis went out for one with whiskers, cowl, and a floor-sweeping robe, and Roosevelt backed him in that choice. Wallace, whose conscience has been bruised every time he allowed himself to look at the realities of agriculture *à la* New Deal, wanted to institute a program of scientific farming under which farmers would be bribed to be good farmers. Davis, however, knew that the farmers to whom the AAA caters do not want to be bribed to be good farmers; they want to be bribed to be rich farmers. Roosevelt could understand that, too.

As a result, there was hastily and secretly drafted a bill which perpetuates all the old objectives of the AAA, with only contracts omitted. What were "benefit payments" under the old AAA become "conditional payments" under the new. What was "crop control" becomes "soil conservation." And the old program was given a further verbal twist. Farmers who had been paid for "doing nothing," as the Liberty League would have it, were now to be paid for "doing something," as the Administration would have it. The planter with a hundred acres in cotton, who under the old AAA would have been paid benefits for retiring forty of those acres, would be paid a bounty under the new AAA not for retiring those forty acres but for turning them into pasture, woodland, or fertility-restoring legumes. The result, of course, would be essentially the same—less cotton and a higher price for it. The result also would be the same with respect to the long-suffering share-croppers, except that there would be no contracts with 'cropper-protection clauses to embarrass the Administration.

As soon as the plan had begun to jell, Wallace sent out a call for all the national farm leaders to assemble in Washington. They came rushing, a hundred strong and aptly described by an observant farm journalist who said, "A 'farm leader' is a man who has no followers." I was assured by men of long intimacy with them that to describe them as the Matt Wolls of organized agriculture would be more than flattering. Like most of the high priests of the A. F. of L., these gentry who assembled Friday morning in Wallace's office were all small business men, drawing down fat salaries from the organizations they head and from the affiliated banks, real estate, and insurance companies. At least one of the farm organizations represented has been shown by Congressional investigations to have made itself the well-paid tool at one time or another of all the major financial or industrial rackets in the country. The American Farm Bureau Federation, into whose leaders' hands the Administration maneuvered the reins of the conference, has been the servant of the power trust, the ship-subsidy grabbers, and a host of industrial tariff lobbies.

It was to help them maintain that pose and, by helping them, to secure their support for the disguised AAA that the Administration called this motley gang to Washington. The Administration was afraid that these men, unless coddled, would return to their old tricks, sell out to the highest bidder, and go roaring about the country demanding currency inflation, higher tariffs, export subsidies, the McNary-Haugen bill, or any one of half a dozen of agriculture's other traditional panaceas.

So the Administration's bill was kept in hiding, and for two days an elaborate pretext was kept up of "consulting the nation's farm leaders" and letting them shape the Administration's program. Adroit guidance of committee selections—including the selection of William H. Settle, Indianapolis head of a Farm Credit Administration adjunct, as chairman of the conference, and the appointment of Earl Smith, Administrator Davis's old pal from the Illinois Agricultural Association, to the "legislative-committee" chairmanship—insured promulgation of a set of recommendations fitting the Administration's program. To make doubly sure of organization support, the recommendations were loosely drawn so that those organization leaders whose followers demand currency inflation, or higher tariffs, or export subsidies could claim to have forced an opening for their eventual inclusion when Congress gets the bill.

It was in precisely this fashion that the original Adjustment Act was drawn, and it too included all the assorted farm panaceas, the Administration forces in Congress having managed their acceptance on a discretionary rather than mandatory basis. It is probable that the new bill will follow the same course in Congress, with the Republican minority hiding behind the old McNary-Haugen bill while they inveigh against the Administration measure, only to vote for it in the end. All that remains is to find a way to make the thing work without compulsion or contracts, and to finance its probable cost of half a billion dollars.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Last War and the Next

I. Morgan, Money, and War

By WALTER MILLIS

FOR the first time in the fifteen years since the ending of the World War the United States is facing with some seriousness the problem of how to keep out of another one. In the debate over this intricate subject a certain amount of new material bearing upon the strictly economic aspects of our entanglement is coming to light, and a good many persons have been stressing what would seem to be the obvious importance of economic factors in any attempt to control such another situation. This emphasis has brought an unexpected response. Mr. Thomas Lamont has descended upon the public prints in a flood of letters disposing of "the myth that it was chiefly American commercial interests, and not Germany, that drew America into the war"; Mr. J. P. Morgan has told the Nye committee that although from the first he considered the defeat of Germany to be vital and did all he could to encompass it, yet Germany alone "drove us into the war," and his own activities had nothing to do with that essential step in defeating the Germans; Professor Seymour of Yale has published a book of essays to demonstrate that the German resumption of unrestricted submarine war was the only relevant factor in our abandonment of neutrality; while the New York *Times* has summarily dismissed "all the fables to the contrary" as either "misunderstandings" or "malicious inventions."

But in thus abolishing some of the mythological ideas now current as to the economic influences behind the American declaration of war, these authorities seem to be in danger of manufacturing an equally misleading myth of their own. If it was really the German submarine decision of January 9, 1917, which alone and automatically determined the issue between neutrality and a full-scale participation in the world's greatest war, we should have to throw up our hands and grant at once that the lives and fortunes of the American people are perpetually at the mercy of outside circumstances which we have no possibility of controlling. Fortunately, it is unnecessary to accept any such hopelessly fatalistic conclusion. One must still ask how it was that the United States came to raise the submarine war into an automatic *casus belli;* and here one is immediately in the presence of many factors more susceptible to our own prevision and control than the possible military exigencies of foreign powers locked in a life-and-death struggle. The economic factor is by no means the only one of these. But it is certainly of more than negligible importance.

The European war was not a month old before at least one Congressman had foreseen that to supply vast quantities of food, clothing, and commercial raw materials, to say nothing of munitions, to one side while the other was debarred from our markets was directly to aid the favored party and so to "invite our own entanglement." It was not a fortnight old before J. P. Morgan and Company had raised the question of floating belligerent loans in the United States, leading Mr. Bryan to the prophetic conclusion that "money is the worst of all contrabands because it commands everything else," and that such loans would "make it all the more difficult for us to maintain neutrality." Even Mr. Lansing agreed at that time that the government should "discourage the money of this country from taking part in foreign wars," just as it discouraged its citizens from enlisting in them. Thus, in the first breaking of the great storm the importance of economic influences upon our own neutrality was quite apparent to those who paused to think about it. And almost from the beginning, great sections of American industry and finance, led by the Morgan firm with all its commanding influence, devoted themselves to establishing the economic complex which tended constantly thereafter to thrust the nation more and more deeply into an economic alliance with the Entente and consequently nearer and nearer to war against Germany.

It is as unnecessary as it is confusing to embroil the subject with allegations as to motive. Whether the leaders of American finance and industry used their great powers as they did because of a vulgar greed for profit, because they thought they were acting in the best interests of the country, or because, as Mr. Lamont once said, they "didn't know how to be neutral," is beside the point.

In what actually happened, as a matter of fact, the motives were clearly mixed beyond any possibility of scientific disentanglement. The outbreak of war in 1914, it must always be remembered, came as a tremendous economic shock to the United States. It thus presented an initial problem—no less urgent for the patriot than for the profit-maker—of salvaging a disaster rather than of exploiting a gold mine. Broadly, there were three possible ways of meeting the economic crisis presented by the sudden dislocation of our great foreign markets. We could let them go and learn to live by ourselves—a course which under the ideas of the time would certainly have seemed too fantastically difficult for consideration had anyone seriously proposed it. We could attempt more or less to restore the pre-war position by insisting upon neutral rights which seemed to guarantee our freedom to carry on our normal peace-time trade with the civil populations of all belligerents. Or we could find substitutes for the lost German and Austro-Hungarian markets by supplying the war needs of the Allies. We were urged into the third course alike by sympathy with the Entente, by the fact that it was practically much the easiest, and by the fact that it was by far the most profitable. The third course was adopted. The motives may have been mixed; the results soon began to appear.

By the end of 1914, with the wheat market sustained on the war demand, with business men already flocking into the rich pastures of Allied war contracts, with the Morgans setting up their purchasing agency to organize American industry in the service of the Allied war effort, the foundations of the economic alliance with the Entente had been firmly laid. The process thus initiated tended rapidly to accelerate

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of its own motion. The pressure of American business interests, seeking the valuable trade which the Entente had to bestow, provided the Entente statesmen with one of their more effective means for undermining the State Department's continued efforts to reopen the trade with the Central Powers. Presently the Morgan purchasing bureau was calling into existence the great munitions industry which we had lacked at the outbreak of the war, thus establishing a new and very direct interest in the Allied war effort. The effects have been shown in the Nye committee's hearings on the ramifications of the rifle contracts, which reached a point at which an attempt to cancel them in 1916 left the Morgans frantically cabling that it was "unthinkable," that "important and influential interests, financially and commercially, are concerned in all these companies," and that banks were "committed . . . far beyond their expectations and even in some cases beyond their legal limits."

The question of payment early arose. In October, 1914, the National City Bank urged upon Mr. Lansing the economic importance of the war-supply business as a reason for permitting the Allies to use bank credits. Dutifully Mr. Lansing perceived that our money must take part in the war after all; transcribing the bank's words as his own, he obtained Mr. Wilson's assent to this first breach in the barrier against loans. The war business was thus encouraged to expand. By the middle of 1915 it was reaching the point where the Allies could no longer carry it on a cash and short-term credit basis; but by that time it was too important to our own prosperity to be simply lopped off, as the non-lending policy would have demanded.

As soon as this embarrassing situation began to appear, the British Ambassador, Sir Cecil Spring Rice, reported that "many secret forces began to act" in favor of a long-term Entente loan. The Nye committee has now revealed these forces earnestly in action. It has shown the Morgans, the commercial banks, the violently pro-Ally McAdoo and equally pro-Ally Lansing, all applying the pressure for long-term loans in order "to maintain our prosperity" and avoid a stoppage of war orders "that would be disastrous"; it has shown the British government apparently adding a little additional "leverage" by unpegging the pound; it has shown Warburg's protests that loans would "violate the spirit of neutrality" swept contemptuously aside, and Wilson tersely acquiescing in the reversal of the position taken a year before. The flotation of the $500,000,000 Anglo-French loan which followed opened the way for this country not only to sell to the Allies but to finance them as well.

Another year passed; the American war-supply business and the consequent dependence of our prosperity upon the Allies continued to grow. Only in the autumn of 1916 did the Allies come as really heavy borrowers into the American money market; from this time on their loans were in general fully secured by the deposit of American and neutral securities, and no doubt the bulk of the Allied borrowing prior to our entry into the war could have been liquidated without great loss in the event of a German victory. The loans themselves thus established more an emotional than an immediate economic interest in Allied victory. But by the spring of 1917 it began to appear that the Allies were running out of collateral. What confronted our bankers and business men, wage-earners and farmers, alike was not the loss of relatively small-scale investments in Allied bonds; it was the loss of the whole rushing trade upon which the national economy was largely being sustained. Our excess of commodity exports in 1916 passed three billion dollars—as against a prewar average of about half a billion—and was mounting through the first three months of 1917 at a rate which would have produced an export balance of about $3,700,000,000 for the year. This *excess* of exports—the trade, that is to say, which had to be sustained by cash or by credit—was on the order of one-tenth the total income of the American people. Its abrupt excision from the national economy clearly would have spelled something very like a first-rate disaster.

Probably only J. P. Morgan and Company appreciated the imminence of the peril, alike to themselves and to the rest of the country. But here was a tremendous potential economic pressure toward American entry into the war, for when the Allied collateral came to an end the United States government would be the only remaining source of credit on the necessary scale, and a government cannot loan money to a belligerent without itself ceasing to be neutral. No doubt it is true that Walter Hines Page's celebrated cable of March, 1917, stressing this situation as an argument for an American declaration of war, was in itself of little significance. The submarine crisis had already reached its last stages by that time, and Mr. Page had long since forfeited the President's confidence. But Mr. Page was certainly not the only one to whom the thought had occurred. McKenna, the British Chancellor of the Exchequer, had realized months before that an American entry into the war would solve his pressing financial difficulties; the Morgans, throughout so anxious to do all in their power to aid the Allied cause, must have recognized the fact; and it will be interesting to learn whether the Nye committee has uncovered any additional instances of this argument entering into the submarine crisis.

Even more interesting, though of course unanswerable, is the question whether the imminent collapse of the war market in the summer of 1917 might not have drawn us into the struggle even without the specific issue of the submarine. It is admittedly difficult to imagine Mr. Wilson asking Congress to declare war on a purely economic calculation; but there was never any lack of loftier grounds for action, and with many other factors urging us on, it does not seem impossible that economic interest might have tipped the scales against neutrality in any event.

Yet these are purely hypothetical realms; events were actually shaped in a different pattern, and it was the primarily political issue of the submarine rather than a failure of war orders which in fact precipitated us into the struggle. This would doubtless raise no difficulty for the thoroughgoing economic determinist. He would point simply to the obvious economic reason for the intransigence of our stand on the submarine and assume that it was the controlling one. Largely because of economic influences we had permitted the Allies to destroy our trade with the Central Powers and had been led step by step into a feverish prosperity resting upon our trade with the Entente. To authorize the U-boat to destroy this latter trade in turn would be to invite a complete and irreparable disaster. So apparent is this that it is difficult to believe that the thought was not behind the vigor

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the periods in which the President denounced the immorality of the U-boat. Spring Rice, the professional diplomat, took it as a matter of course. There was an "important difference," he noted on the morrow of the declaration of unrestricted submarine war, between the crisis which it produced and that created two years before by the sinking of the Lusitania. The effect of the unrestricted war "has been to cause a very severe loss in values, especially in cotton and wheat. This is a very serious matter. If the Germans are able to make good their menace to any extent, a practical blockade of American ports is carried out, as three-fifths of the trade is with the Allies." Yet in the actual development of the Wilson submarine policy it is extraordinary how scant are the tangible evidences of the influence of such mundane calculations.

The material may be illusory, for statesmen and their memorialists alike show a notable reluctance about committing their more severely materialistic cogitations to history. It is apparent, however, from the way in which the submarine issue actually arose that it was not originally an economic controversy. The President rashly committed himself to hold the Germans to "strict accountability"—thus giving a hostage to fate which he could not afterward recover—in the winter of 1915, when few in this country supposed that the submarine could ever seriously interfere with British trade, much less that it might prove to be almost the decisive weapon of the war. His attitude was hardened in the Lusitania crisis by the influence primarily of emotional and political factors; and, as the quotation from Spring Rice suggests, the true economic importance of the submarine to ourselves was not apparent until after the President had taken a stand in regard to it from which retreat must in any case have been difficult.

But if the direct effect of economic interest on the submarine controversy is obscure, the indirect effects are reasonably apparent. It is not only that when millions, both great and small, found their profits or their prosperity bound up with the Allied side, the fact must have lent added passion to the arguments they discovered for urging the government onward upon a course that could only benefit the Entente and hamstring the Germans. When Senator Lodge took the flamingly moral stand that "the body of an innocent child floating upon the water is to me a more poignant and a more tragic spectacle than an unsold bale of cotton," we may guess, even if we cannot know, that the interest of the Senator's constituents in the exports protected by the presence of the innocent children may have had something to do with it. We do know the countless other instances in which those who were concerned with the Entente war business brought every sort of pressure to bear to strengthen our intransigence toward the Germans. Mr. Warburg, indeed, interpreted the 1916 election returns as showing a majority still convinced that the war was "none of our affair" with only the "war-business and prosperity-first" Northeast hurrying the nation into it.

We know, for example, that Mr. H. P. Davison and Mr. Paul Cravath were at one time "anxious to form a committee which should educate American opinion regarding the democratic principles for which Great Britain and France were fighting"; we also know that Mr. Dwight Morrow properly—and no less astutely—vetoed this proposal for a secret propaganda against our neutrality. But we find Mr. Morrow himself writing "with great subtlety"—as Mr. Harold Nicolson justly puts it—to Mr. Lansing, urging the Secretary of State to influence the President to exert a greater "leadership" as against Mr. Bryan; and this at the moment when Bryan had resigned because of the President's too reckless leadership in the Lusitania crisis. It can never have occurred to Mr. Morrow that there was anything improper in thus secretly utilizing the great influence of his firm to push the country onward in a bellicose policy that accorded with his own economic interest. But, again, the purity of the motive does not affect the results of the influence, and such details suggest with what caution one must accept Mr. Lamont's recent statement that "nothing could be farther from the truth" than the impression that "this firm or any of its partners carried on propaganda in favor of our going to war . . . or attempted to influence Washington in favor of war." In the rather narrow sense in which Mr. Lamont evidently uses these words, they are of only secondary relevance to the question.

Economic influences must have played their part in building up the submarine controversy to the explosive tension which sufficed to precipitate us, not merely into military action in defense of our nationals against U-boats, but into a great national crusade for the total defeat of Germany, leading us to pour out billions of money for the rescue of the Entente, to raise 5,000,000 men and ship 2,000,000 of them to the Entente battlefields, to sacrifice a hundred times as many lives as were taken by the submarine, and to prepare for the sacrifice of hundreds of thousands more. But though this positive effect can, in the nature of things, be only vaguely estimated, economic considerations also had a negative effect on the handling of the submarine controversy, and here the evidence is more precise. At the time of the Lusitania crisis, and even before, Mr. Bryan very correctly analyzed the course to which the President was committing himself. Since Mr. Wilson possessed no threat adequate to strike the submarine weapon from the hands of a desperate Germany without actually going to war, war was the logically inevitable consequence of the Wilson policy. Unless we were in effect to withdraw the policy—by warning Americans off ships going into the war zones and reserving the legal question for post-war settlement—there were but two general methods open to practical statesmanship for escaping this consequence. One was to make it worth Germany's while to abandon the U-boat by insisting upon American sea rights that were quite as valuable to Germany as to the United States. The other was to terminate the war by forcing both sides to peace negotiations.

In fact, the President was to experiment for a time with the first device and ultimately to make a determined effort with the second. Again, one must cite other than purely economic factors to explain the total failure of each; but in both cases the President was seriously handicapped by the economic alliance with the Entente which had been allowed to develop. For both devices necessitated putting severe pressure on the Entente, and this we were unable to do because of our dependence on the Entente war orders. As Professor Seymour has put it: "If Wilson had destroyed the basis of our prosperity in order to compel immediate acceptance of the American interpretation of international law, he would

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

have provoked something like a revolt against his Administration."

The efforts to compromise the sea war continued intermittently from the sinking of the Lusitania until the spring of 1916; but at no time did the United States give any real indication of insisting upon the rights which our formidable-sounding notes asserted against the Allied blockade measures. We know now that Mr. Lansing, who was no less impressed by the necessity of maintaining the war-supply business than by the necessity of defeating Germany, deliberately spun out the controversy with Great Britain and enmeshed it in fine legalisms in order to prevent its ever coming to a head. But unless it came to a head there was no hope of regularizing the submarine question; and the attempt ended in April, 1916, when Colonel House told Count Bernstorff, the German Ambassador, that "it would be easier to bring about peace than to cause England to abandon the blockade. . . . A prohibition of exports as a weapon against the blockade is not possible, as the prevailing prosperity would suffer by it." Professor Seymour suspects that this was much more Bernstorff's argument than House's, but however that may be, the fact is that Wilson's efforts were thereafter to be concentrated on the alternative means of escape from the war danger—that of forcing peace in Europe.

Yet for this it was still necessary to bring pressure upon the Allies as well as upon Germany, and it was essential to regain a more nearly impartial position ourselves. The way was apparently made easier by the President's deepening irritation with the Allies in the summer and fall of 1916, and by the resentment aroused by the "black lists" and other measures tightening the Entente control over American commerce. By the latter part of July the President was telling House that his patience was at an end and that he was considering asking Congress for authority to prohibit further Allied loans and embargo exports. It was the beginning of a wholly new movement which might profoundly have altered our relationship to the struggle and at last have cut us free from the war complex into which we were sinking. But Spring Rice, while recognizing that the British would have to step cautiously in meeting it, was not seriously worried. "The reason," he reported in August, "why there has been no embargo on arms and ammunition is . . . the sense that the prosperity of the country, on which the Administration depends for its existence, would be imperiled by such a measure. . . . At present I don't see any chance of it."

There was none. In September Congress did enact legislation authorizing the President to retaliate upon the Allies. But in August and September J. P. Morgan and Company floated $350,000,000 worth of French and British bonds with more soon to come. The retaliatory legislation said nothing whatever about loans. Our war exports continued to boom. The act said nothing about an embargo on exports; its largest club was an authorization to embargo imports from the Allies. When even this weak threat was submitted to Mr. Redfield, the Secretary of Commerce, for study as to how it might be utilized in a way that "would be effective and, at the same time, least injurious to this country," his experts replied with the conclusion that "immediate reprisals as authorized by recent laws afford no assurance of success and threaten even the present basis of neutral commerce." The reprisals were never applied.

The President was to make a last attempt on his own account to break the economic strait-jacket in which he was caught. At the end of November the Federal Reserve Board issued a warning to the banks against investing in British treasury bills, a method of short-term financing to which the British were about to resort on a large scale. The purpose was apparently to shake the Allied credit and thereby to check the war-supply business in the United States, and, as Spring Rice put it, "to exercise pressure" on the Allies "in order to accelerate peace." The Morgans, at any rate, were seriously alarmed, and the British seem to have tried the exercise of a little counter-pressure by putting out the rumor that they would take their trade to Canada or Australia. The whole passage is another upon which one hopes the Nye committee may shed further light. The British threat was, of course, as unreal as the American, and the warning was not at that time withdrawn. But the British Treasury bestirred itself to find other means for meeting the immediate problem, while the Morgans, addressing themselves to the task of floating another long-term British loan, helped to repair whatever damage was done to British credit in general, thus averting the danger to the country's export trade and nullifying the Presidential pressure to "accelerate peace."

It must be granted that the President's chances of forcing a peace in Europe at the end of 1916 were slim at best; and it would certainly be too much to say that economic pressure was solely responsible for his failure. Economic pressure did, however, forbid his resort to the one instrument which might have given some hope, at least, of success; and in so far as it was responsible for closing the last door through which he might conceivably have escaped from the situation which had been allowed to develop, it must in still another way be regarded as a significant factor in determining the final outcome.

It is along some such lines as these that one must trace the strictly economic influences entering into the complex which converted us from the correct neutrality of 1914 to the passionate hostility against Germany of the summer of 1917. They do not reveal any significant conspiracy of profiteers, intriguing to compel the President and Congress into a declaration of war for the direct and vulgar advantage of their own pocket-books. But so concrete a demonstration as that is rarely achieved even by the most rigid economic determinists; nor is it necessary to the view that economic influences and the great economic powers wielded by our leading bankers and industrialists were important factors in our experience last time, and offer no less important possibilities for the better control of such another situation in the future. One must agree wholly with Mr. Newton Baker that "America's security from future wars cannot be secured by muzzling bankers or disabling munitions makers." Unhappily, there is no method whereby this or any other country can be finally guaranteed against a future war; economic motives are only a part of the problem of reducing the chances of war, and even these motives—although our available techniques for dealing with them are rather better than our techniques for dealing with the emotional or instinctive facets of human nature—are difficult to control. But it does not follow that nothing can be done in that direction.

[*Mr. Millis's second article on The Last War and the Next will appear next week.*]

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Slumbering Fires in Harlem

By OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

LLOYD HOBBS, sixteen, and his brother Russell, both colored, were New York high-school students of excellent standing and character. On the evening of March 19, 1935, these boys came out of a moving picture house and noticed a small crowd standing before a shop near the corner of 128th Street and Seventh Avenue. Eager to see what was happening they joined the crowd, only to behold an amazing spectacle. The windows of the shop had been broken, and colored people inside were passing out to others the contents of the store. Soon afterward a police car drove up to the curb, and one of its two occupants alighted, brandishing a pistol. At once everybody ran. Patrolman John F. McInerny picked out Lloyd Hobbs as his quarry. He swears that he called on Lloyd to halt; other witnesses swear that he did not. Without stopping to fire a shot in the air, this guardian of the peace brought down Lloyd as he was running across 128th Street by a bullet which passed through his body and into his wrist. Lloyd died in the Harlem Hospital a few days later. McInerny has neither been indicted nor tried by the Police Department.

This was in many ways the most tragic and certainly the most unnecessary event of the riots which kept the center of Harlem in turmoil for the entire evening and night of March 19-20. The deaths were few, the injuries and arrests numerous; the damage to plate glass alone ran up to $150,000. It was a passionate but an undirected outbreak. It was not engineered by Communists or anti-Semites, nor was it a racial riot in the sense of white and colored being aligned against each other. The stores that were raided were owned by Jews, white Gentiles, and Negroes. The affair had its origin in a wholly unfounded rumor that a boy caught stealing a pen-knife in Kresge's store on 125th Street had been beaten and murdered by employees in the store basement.

The rumor spread like wildfire. The boy was in fact caught in his theft at 2:30 p.m. and released unharmed. But within an hour crowds began to form and refused to believe statements by store employees and some of the police. By 5:30 it was necessary to close the store. At 6:30 a window of the store was smashed, and the disturbance then grew rapidly. At 7:30 the Young Liberators, a radical colored group bent on protecting the rights of the Negroes, issued a false leaflet that a boy had been maltreated in the Kresge store and was near death, and the Young Communist League also spread the statement in a broadside. Neither organization took the trouble to ascertain the facts. There are still Negroes in Harlem who believe to this day that the boy was killed, despite the fact that he was photographed with a colored police lieutenant on the night of the riot and that he has twice appeared at public hearings and sworn that he was the guilty lad.

Never did a serious public disorder arise with less immediate provocation. Why, then, did this outburst take place? The answer has been fully established by Mayor LaGuardia's Commission on Conditions in Harlem, headed by Dr. C. H. Roberts, a leading colored dentist, appointed to look into the entire situation. The rumor was simply the match to touch off a magazine which had been years preparing. The nerves of a considerable portion of a community of 200,000 people snapped because of five and a half years of depression, with an unemployment average of no less than 70 per cent in certain areas, because of economic and social discrimination and prejudice, because of rank misgovernment greatly accentuated by certain specific grievances. Thus the riot was preceded by a determined movement among the colored residents of Harlem to obtain employment for some of their number in the many stores which owe their very existence to Negro patronage. The Kresge store was one of these; it had only two or three Negroes in its employ when the storm broke.

But this was only one grievance. Other wrongs were persistent: grievous mishandlings by the police in violation of the Bill of Rights, seriously inadequate school accommodations, discrimination in the administration of relief to destitute unemployed, inadequate hospitalization and institutional care, bad housing and worse overcrowding in the tenements, indefensibly high rentals, inadequate playgrounds and recreation centers, the closing of one avenue after another to economic advancement—these were some of the conditions which caused the sudden outburst. The wonder is that the emotions of the Negroes did not get out of hand before, and the danger is that there will be other outbreaks if the depression continues and the situation in other respects remains unchanged.

Inadequate School Accommodations

Take the question of the schools. The keen interest of colored parents in school conditions in Harlem astonished the Mayor's Commission. Not only the various Parents' Associations but every intelligent person in Harlem knows that that section has been gravely discriminated against by the Board of Education, over which the Mayor of New York has only slight control. Actually there have been only nine schools built in Harlem since 1900, and not one elementary school since 1924, yet this period covers the tremendous influx of Negroes from the South as a result of the World War. Moreover, since many Negro schools have been closed in the South during the depression, parents have recklessly shipped their children to friends or relatives or even speaking acquaintances in the North in the hope that they would be taken in and educated. It has been extremely difficult to fit these children into classes, since most of the Harlem schools are compelled to hold two, and in some cases three, sessions from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m., with a strain upon teachers and pupils and the educational plant which needs no belaboring. There are between forty and fifty pupils to a class in fully half of the elementary schools. The problem would be difficult enough if all these children were well nourished and adequately clad, but they are not. Johnny A., whose case lies before me, is unfortunately not exceptional. His teacher discovered that he was half-fainting from hunger and had not had sufficient food for three days. School lunches are furnished, and teachers make every effort to discover such cases and to aid them, but there are only a few visiting teachers to act as liaison officers between school and family.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

If Johnny A. came from a home which was normal and intact and merely hungry, he was lucky. The principal of one school testified that out of 1,600 families 700 were "broken." In fully 90 per cent of these the father was missing, and the mother was trying not only to do all the housework and cooking for her children but to go out to work besides. After school the children are adrift upon the streets or at home alone or in bad company. Often male and female solicitors are in evidence when the girls' schools empty their pupils into the streets in the early afternoon, so much so that several principals testified that they had had to demand a police guard. The police themselves seem to be unable to drive away the evil resorts of every kind that infest numerous neighborhoods.

The commission also found that the school plant was "old, shabby, and far from modern," in many instances neither sanitary nor well kept nor free from serious fire hazards. Four of the schools are without auditoriums; one tries to serve luncheons to 1,000 children when there are seats for only 175. There is no special school for overage boys and girls, and there is complete lack of coordination between the home, the school, and public-welfare agencies. Worst of all, there is no school or institution to which a delinquent child may be sent. There are such for white Protestants, Catholics, and Jews, but not one for Negroes. There is no nursery school. The teachers are so terrorized by superior authority that many of them would not testify before the commission except with a guaranty of protection and the suppression of their names in the records. The only pleasant aspect of the whole situation is that there was proof of complete and cordial cooperation between white and colored teachers.

Discrimination in Relief

As for the relief situation, it is not easy to say just how much conscious discrimination exists, but there has certainly been a lot of it. Take the case of Mrs. F. W., who told the principal of a school that her three children were unable to go to school because they were so hungry. This woman was trying to keep herself and her children alive on two cans of milk and two of beef issued every two weeks, the relief bureau being out of other articles listed on her supplementary-relief card. Investigation showed that she had been sent to the Bureau for Mothers' Pensions and to the Home Relief Bureau, but had received nothing because she had got some insurance after the death of her husband, a veteran, for whose funeral expenses the government had made a cash grant. The undertaker had received this money and more besides. What was left had been taken from her by a brother-in-law, but the city authorities insisted that they could not aid her because she had had this money, and they held to this position long after the time during which the $200 or $300 would have sufficed to maintain her and her three children. Similar things have doubtless happened elsewhere in the city, but the colored people are convinced that it happens more often in their case.

An especial hardship for the Negroes has been the requirement that all applicants asking for relief give up all insurance policies above $500. Often these small policies represent the entire life savings of the holder. More than that, these sums are counted on to assure a worthy funeral—funerals bulk very large in Negro life and the thought of a pauper's grave is a dreadful one. At the beginning of the relief work in New York City there was a marked tendency to discriminate against the Negro and to assign every Negro applicant to one of those menial jobs which in the public mind are associated with Negroes, no matter if the applicant had been a white-collar or professional worker all his life. It is also true that at the outset no Negro of standing was given a position of authority in the relief organizations. After the riots three were appointed administrators in precinct offices. Today the work has been much more standardized, and there are no longer charges of discrimination in the matter of food issued, but people in charge of public-work projects are in general unable to find opportunities for high-grade Negro workers. Fortunately the new Works Progress Administrator, Victor Ridder, has set his face rigidly against any racial discrimination.

Police Violence

Harlem is never an easy police problem. That under existing conditions it presents a more difficult one than ever must be plain. If that entitles the police of the city of New York to sympathy, it does not put an end to criticism. The hearings before the Mayor's Commission on the riots and what caused them were as exciting and dramatic as anything ever put upon the stage, and the revelations of intense bitterness and antagonism toward the police were a shock to all who heard. Arthur Garfield Hays, who presided admirably as chairman of the subcommittee on the riots, allowed the fullest latitude to witnessess, to lawyers, to Communists, and even to casual spectators; all the hearings of the commission served a most useful purpose as safety valves. Most surprising of all was the fact that the colored people were as bitter against colored men in uniform as against white officers. The hostility was justified in many cases; the police respect the rights of the individual citizen no more in Harlem than elsewhere. Several police officials, when asked by Mr. Hays to state what their right to arrest was, showed ignorance of the law requiring warrants. They admitted that the police are constantly going into homes and taking out people without due process of law. It appeared also that men are being arrested on the streets at the will of the police without even having given ground for suspicion.

One of the few amusing moments was afforded by the testimony of a reporter for a Communist newspaper who said that he had been arrested and taken to the police station for walking on the street with a colored woman. He was detained for some time, in fact, until he was able to prove that he was a Negro. Such detentions and arrests are frequent and are defended by the police on the ground that they contribute to the breaking up of prostitution in Harlem. But the fact is that there is an enormous amount of prostitution, that hundreds of white men invade this district every night, that investigators for the commission report one tenement house after another as infested with prostitutes and representatives of every form of vice, and that the police make no efficient effort to remedy these conditions. It is of course obvious that even if this procedure of arresting white men for walking with colored women were a remedial police measure, it would still be contrary to law. But annoyances like these are insignificant, aside from the principle involved, in comparison with many cases of brutal violence.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

One policeman who appeared before the commission admitted having killed two Negroes within a year. One was a sixteen-year-old boy charged with burglary whom he shot as the boy was running off. The other was a mildly intoxicated man whom the officer was called by another Negro to arrest. The drunken man having lightly hit the policeman on the shoulder, the latter hauled off and hit the man with such violence that he knocked him down and fractured his skull. The man died just as he was carried into a hospital. In neither case, so far as appears, was the act of the officer investigated by a high official, nor was the man placed on trial to defend the propriety of his acts. Even worse was the case of Thomas Aiken, who six days before the riot was standing at the end of one line of relief seekers in the armory of the colored regiment. Another line was behind him with a space between for people to pass through. Some men came in and filled the vacant space; two policemen ordered them away and Aiken also. When he protested, they not only beat him unmercifully but actually gouged out one eye. No allegation was made that Aiken was armed or that he in any way attacked the officers. The incident occurred in broad daylight in a public building and can only be described as an act of sadistic cruelty and complete abuse of official authority. But here again the grand jury refused to indict and the Police Commissioner to punish.

Like many of his predecessors, the present Police Commissioner seems to run the department on the theory that the police are to be upheld at any cost. The commission made the suggestion that a policeman who uses his revolver with fatal results should be put on trial and, if acquitted, commended and the commendation communicated to the entire force. If, on the other hand, the verdict went the other way, he should be punished by the loss of his position and by a trial and conviction in a criminal court. The commission's appeal to the Mayor and the Police Commissioner has as yet been ineffective. The Commissioner has shown no desire to cooperate with the commission or to remedy conditions, with the result that the commission is now considering a mass-meeting at which it might lay the facts and what it is trying to accomplish before the public. To the commission's suggestion that there be formed a joint committee of whites and Negroes to which anyone could go with complaints about police conduct, which committee would promote intelligent cooperation with the Police Department, the Commissioner replied that he could not consent to that as the Police Department does not recognize any color line!

Hospitals and Health

With respect to hospitals and other public institutions, there are countless reasons for public unrest in West Harlem. The only municipal hospital in this area is the Harlem Hospital, for years past a storm center because of shocking overcrowding. With a bed capacity of 325 it is not an unusual occurrence for the hospital to house as many as 450. The average daily attendance for 1934 was 393. Men and women are turned out just as soon as they can be moved. Some are sent to other institutions in the city only to be returned, in one case no less than three times. The regulations of the College of Surgeons as to the amount of air space each patient should have are constantly violated. There are cots in the hallways; even stretchers are used as beds, and so are chairs. In the wards the beds are side by side so that there is practically no privacy. There are constant charges of lack of discipline and of inefficiency, but it is of course impossible for any staff of physicians, surgeons, and nurses to do good work under such conditions.

The central fact remains that Harlem has been served by only one public hospital—325 beds for a population of over 200,000. How great is the need appears from the fact that in four Harlem health areas, in which Negroes constituted between 95 and 100 per cent of the population in 1929-33, the infant-mortality rate ranged from 94 to 120 per thousand of live births as contrasted with 55 for the city as a whole in 1931; and the tuberculosis mortality rate ranged from 251 to 319 per 100,000 population, the rate for the United States being 64.6 in 1930. The tuberculosis figures are for the very area in which the Harlem Hospital is situated. These figures are in striking contrast to the health situation in the East Harlem district, where only 10 per cent of the population is Negro. It remains to be added that there is not a single convalescent home to which Negroes can be sent. What makes the situation worse from the Negro point of view is the constant discrimination against colored members of the medical staff of the Harlem Hospital. It took years to get Negro physicians and nurses assigned to this hospital, and they still have to contend against racial prejudice.

Thus far the Mayor's Commission has published three reports, one on the housing situation, one on the police, and one on the schools, with a fourth on hospitals coming. The first, for which a subcommittee headed by Morris L. Ernst was responsible, resulted, thanks largely to Mr. Ernst's energy and the cooperation of the city officials, in bringing about some improvement in the housing laws as affecting Harlem. The police and school reports lay for weeks unpublished in the office of the overworked Mayor, and other scheduled reports are still lagging. This is disappointing, and so is the fact that no one in the city administration has been assigned to the task of starting a long-range reform program. The Mayor has practically no control over the school board, which persistently overlooks the Harlem schools when called upon to set up a large building program. The Mayor is eager to do what is right and is well aware of the need, but where the millions necessary for the reconstruction of Harlem or for furnishing even the necessary institutional care can be found no one knows.

It is a question whether the Mayor's Commission should not be succeeded by a volunteer body to keep after the city until at least a beginning in the job of ameliorating existing conditions has been made. Only one important result of the commission's work is so far in sight: an elaborate report on the Harlem situation is being drafted by Dr. E. Franklin Frazier, a professor in Howard University, who was given a leave of absence for the purpose of conducting this survey, for which federal aid was obtained. One housing project is under way with the aid of money from Washington and with the full approval of Secretary Ickes, but this has its discouraging side in that it is using for housing the best tract available in Harlem for recreation and playground purposes. And it is only a beginning. Unlimited sums are needed to wipe out the slums and to supply the additional recreation grounds and parks and the institutions which must be built if Harlem is to be brought up to the standard of other portions of the city.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

What Remains of the League?

By HAROLD J. LASKI

[*Mr. Laski's article was delayed on its way from England. Written and mailed the day after Sir Samuel Hoare's resignation, it arrived just in time for inclusion in this issue of* The Nation. *Omitting his exposition of the events leading up to the government crisis, by this time generally known, we present herewith Mr. Laski's analysis and conclusions, both of which are still of interest.*—EDITORS THE NATION.]

London, December 19

SIR SAMUEL HOARE'S explanation of the crisis which led to his resignation is that when he went to Paris he found a dangerous situation which might easily lead to war. Either there must be conciliation or oil sanctions must be applied. Mussolini would regard the latter as a military sanction and might attack the British fleet. The French, though pledged to assist, were not ready for mobilization; and no other power in the League had taken any precautions for defense. In the circumstances he thought it right to agree to an offer which might avert a European catastrophe. He was, he said, prepared to justify the terms outlined on the basis of a reasonable settlement. Mr. Baldwin, explaining in the House of Commons the position of the government, added that Sir Samuel Hoare had reshaped these terms without the authority of the Cabinet, which subsequently indorsed them because, though they went too far (in what way he did not say), it could not repudiate an absent colleague and so compel his resignation.

All this is wholly unsatisfactory. Mr. Peterson of the Foreign Office had been negotiating with M. Saint Quentin of the Quai d'Orsay for some weeks. The Hoare-Laval proposals were the outcome of these discussions. Their character must, therefore, have been known for some time (a) to Sir Samuel Hoare, (b) to the Prime Minister, and (c) presumably to the Cabinet; and Sir Robert Vansittart, the Permanent Secretary of the Foreign Office, was associated with the last stages of the Paris discussions. It seems to follow that something like these proposals were known to the Cabinet before Sir Samuel Hoare agreed to them. What were Mr. Peterson's instructions? Did the Cabinet think that anything like what has emerged satisfied either the Covenant of the League or the government's election protestations of loyalty to the League? And is Sir Robert Vansittart fit to be the head of the Foreign Office if, whether on procedural or on substantial grounds, he does not prevent his minister from making such a grievous and criminal blunder?

Nor is this all. Mr. Baldwin sacrifices Sir Samuel Hoare to the fury of public opinion. But the Cabinet—including that League enthusiast, Mr. Eden—indorsed proposals they now aver they disliked. Had they not been published by indiscretion, the British public would almost certainly have known nothing about them until Mussolini had accepted them, and Abyssinia, and probably the League, had rejected them. It looks as though, in that event, the British and French governments would have been prepared to call off sanctions against Italy. That, on what appears the most likely interpretation of his position, was the policy M. Laval was aiming at, and in that policy—a clear outrage against the League—the British government would have been *particeps criminis*.

What, further, are we to assume of a judgment which argues, as Sir Samuel Hoare argued, that a possible threat by Mussolini should be followed by a panic on the part of the British government? What was their authority for dismembering Abyssinia to placate a growingly unsuccessful Mussolini? If it was the fear of war, what better method could they have adopted for encouraging aggressor states all over the world? If it was the fear of war, what steps had they taken to define to themselves the meaning of that collective security to which, from September until the other day, they gave such eager lip-service? Or is the explanation the much more simple one that they do not desire the fall of Mussolini, which would certainly follow on his defeat? From any angle, the mere resignation of Sir Samuel Hoare does not end the issue. The country has only just missed the gravest betrayal of modern times. The men who were prepared to sanction that betrayal are still in office. What credit can we attach to their professions of faith in the next critical months? Mr. Baldwin has still to deal with the issues created by these grim facts.

For, on any showing, the following consequences emerge from the situation this crisis created:

1. There is a grave disparity between the country's conception of collective security and that of the Baldwin government.

2. No one can now trust this government's loyalty to the League.

3. No one can now trust it—the greatest power in the League—to act as an "honest broker" between Italy and Abyssinia.

4. All the prestige won by Sir Samuel Hoare for the League ideal by his September speech has been thrown away. With it goes Great Britain's leadership in the League.

5. What future, if any, have sanctions? Are we now to infer that collective security breaks down once it implies the possibility of war? If so, what value has the League except as a statistical organization?

6. Will not the repercussion of this incident be the encouragement of fascist aggression all over Europe and the Far East?

7. Is not the foreign policy of the Baldwin government now in ruins? When are we to have a considered account of the principles upon which it will act in the future? And what proofs shall we be offered that it is, in fact, loyal to its professions?

Two other things it is, I think, necessary to say. It is impossible to accept Mr. Baldwin's account of the crisis as satisfactory. He says that the Cabinet acted as it did in order not to repudiate an absent colleague. But he does not explain why, when public indignation against that colleague rose high, he then accepted the resignation of the colleague whose action the Cabinet had indorsed. The true inference, if there is any serious meaning in the idea of collective Cabinet responsibility, would have been the resignation, not merely

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of Sir Samuel Hoare, but of all those who, *ex post facto,* made his policy their own. You cannot conduct cabinet government in a parliamentary system, as Sir Stafford Cripps said in the debate, on the principle of collective security with individual sacrifices.

Not less fundamental is the wider issue. Is the policy of the League of Nations compatible with an imperialist system? To me, at least, this last incident is only one more proof that the answer to this question is definitely in the negative. Not only does Japanese aggression in the Far East continue unchecked; not only does rearmament proceed upon an unexampled scale; not only is there now reason to suspect the *bona fides* of both France and Great Britain in relation to the League. Public opinion, as in this instance, may cause the fall of a particular minister; it may even bring down the Laval government in the next weeks. But, effectively, the contradictions between imperialist purposes and the League ideal remain; in a society of capitalist states they appear incapable of resolution. I doubt whether anything can now resuscitate the League save a resounding victory in the Italo-Abyssinian crisis. It is not easy to believe, in the light of the Hoare incident, that the main members of the League are prepared to pay the price that victory may involve.

Loose Construction

By HEYWOOD BROUN

I HEARD a Communist say once that the Russian Revolution was brought about by a group of not more than 20,000 persons. "A rather larger number would probably be required in America," he added. Recent developments would seem to prove his supposition incorrect. At the moment a nucleus of only nine appears to be doing profoundly effective work to make the overthrow of government in this country possible.

* * *

THERE is no denying that the examination of the bankers by the Munitions Committee brought out information which should be useful to us in attempts to preserve neutrality. Senator Nye and the men associated with him have done a good job, but on the basis of two sessions it seemed to me that the examination might have been more pointed and more searching.

I am thinking wholly of technique and not of intent. Of the banking group Mr. J. P. Morgan was easily the most expansive. He rather enjoyed having an opportunity to talk. Perhaps he is somewhat suppressed in his own office. Sound strategy should have suggested constant pressure against the back hand of Mr. Morgan. To some extent this was done, but Thomas Lamont was quick to poach upon his associate's territory. At such times as Mr. Morgan fumbled or seemed to be inclined to talk too freely Lamont leaped in with a sort of I-think-Mr.-Morgan-means-to-say attitude. And it would have been distinctly in the province of any examiner to say, "One at a time, boys. Tom, don't you talk while John is speaking." I think the Senate ought to be more scrupulous in protecting the rights of the head of the House of Morgan.

IN New Orleans, where the law schools met in convention, a story went about concerning Professor Thomas Reed Powell, who is famous as the most indiscreet member of the Harvard faculty. One of the students in a course on constitutional law was markedly slow in his utterance. In discussing a Supreme Court case he began, "Professor Powell, do you believe Justice Sutherland thought ——?"

"No," said Reed Powell. "Are there any other questions?"

* * *

THE man by the window in the smoking compartment wanted everybody to know that he was a Californian. "I heard one of you gentlemen say something about the American Federation of Labor," he began, "but you people in the South and the East don't know anything about labor troubles. I don't know whether it's generally known or not, but we almost had violence in San Francisco in the general strike. I suppose we've got the finest cops you could find anywhere out in San Francisco. They know their stuff and they know their people. I don't mean, of course, that there isn't a little petty grafting about stolen automobiles and things like that, but our cops are kind and they are considerate.

"They had to shoot two of the strikers after the reds came in. It was the reds that caused it. And would you believe it, they had a funeral parade for those dead strikers. It stretched for blocks and blocks. You might have thought it was Armistice Day or some other patriotic holiday. It was just ignorance of course. Those people parading didn't know how the two men got shot. They didn't even know what it was all about. I remember I asked a taxi driver just before the general-strike call came whether he was going out, and he said he was. When I asked him why, all he could say was that he was on the side of the workers. Just ignorant you see. It's the leaders that fool 'em.

"Well, believe you me, when they began to tell respectable citizens what restaurants and grocery stores and cafes they couldn't use, that was a little too much. When a man's baby is hungry, you can't stop him by telling him that something is illegal. A bunch of five thousand of the finest fellows in San Francisco got together. In confidence, one of them is the president of the club I belong to. Another was the vice-president of the very bank where I have my account. Make no mistake about it, these were solid citizens, patriotic Americans. I suppose everybody knows where they got their forty-fives, and in addition they told the police the precise time they'd arrive at each of the red strongholds. They promised the police that they wouldn't shoot unless any of the yellow agitating dogs put up a fight. We even had national guardsmen in that crowd. Of course they didn't wear their uniforms. That might have given a bad impression. They raced through the city that night and just tore everything loose from its moorings in all the red headquarters—typewriters, presses, tables, chairs—everything they could lay their hands on. And of course the cops always came half an hour late and reported that they couldn't possibly find out who'd been around.

"That's patriotism for you all the way up and down the line. The vice-president of a bank and an Irish cop both standing shoulder to shoulder for the good old United States. With loyalty like that nothing can lick us, but let me tell you that if that crowd of five thousand patriots hadn't come together, there would have been violence in San Francisco."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Correspondence

"Squaring the Circle"

To the Editors of The Nation:

Your comment on "Squaring the Circle" in the issue of December 25, in your "Joseph Wood Krutch Says" column, says that "after some revision" it is now approved by the *New Masses.*

In this you are following the say-so of the *New Masses* and the *New Theater* as well. The alleged "revision" took place only in the minds of the editors of those magazines and amounts to a puerile device on their part to save face for Mike Gold. The implication is that the play has now been duly purged under pressure from the orthodox left and that Mr. Gold's fit of Hearsterics was justified.

As a matter of simple fact, there has been no revision. One of the actors, a midget, has been sensibly replaced by a real child, as I had begged the producers to do from the beginning. The sound effects have been improved and maybe one or two other minor matters in staging have been straightened out. But in not a single essential has there been the revision implied by the *New Masses* and the *New Theater* and accepted, in all innocence, by yourself.

The supposed revision is one of the most bald-faced lies ever devised to placate a tender-skinned revolutionary writer.

New York, December 20 Eugene Lyons

To the Editors of The Nation:

Herbert Kline, editor of *New Theater,* was the left-wing critic who most warmly defended "Squaring the Circle" against my own attack on the play. Here is an extract from an editorial in *New Theater* (December, 1935): "The producers and directors [of the play] met with those [left-wing] critics who saw that certain changes would make the production a clearly sympathetic one, and some of these changes were made."

Since Herbert Kline was one of these critics, I would say it is he and the director and producer, and not I, that Lyons is calling a "bald-faced liar." I was not in on the revision, nor have I seen the play since. But I know that Herbert Kline is not given to lying. Nor would he have a motive in this case, since nobody, including myself, has ever thought I needed to have my face saved. I am still glad that I pointed out the vulgar gags and anti-Soviet slant that had been inserted in Katayev's comedy. If other left-wing critics differed with me, that surely is only a sign that nobody imposes our opinions on us from some mysterious "headquarters" that exists in the imagination of Eugene Lyons. Incidentally, many of us have followed his anti-Soviet articles for the past few years, and think he is not a bald-faced but a most subtle liar.

New York, December 29 Michael Gold

Black Lists and Bedding

To the Editors of The Nation:

In your issue of December 4 is an article by Ruth Brindze, in which she states that the Chicago Better Business Bureau has a list of manufacturers of bedding whose products are blacklisted. We beg to advise you that we have no black list of firms in any industry. Our reports carry names of firms which have committed infractions of what we believe to be good business practices.

We have received a large number of inquiries from members of the public who apparently have read this article, and we are advising them that we do not have any black list of the nature described in your publication. Further, it probably would be of little advantage to these inquirers to have the names of those manufacturers whose products have been found to contain what we believe to be second-hand material inasmuch as most of these products are retailed in this immediate trading area, whereas the inquiries are from many points throughout the United States.

A. B. Johnson, Merchandise Manager,
Chicago, December 15 Chicago Better Business Bureau

To the Editors of The Nation:

Certainly the list of firms where dirty and mislabeled bedding was found is not an honor role and popularly would be called a black list. These lists have appeared in the reports of the Chicago Better Business Bureau, and since I received them in mimeographed form, which appeared to be that of a press release, I assumed that the same information would also be readily available to the buying public.

The statement that the lists would be of little value to consumers is questionable, first, because the bureau said in its November 14 release, "This obligation [to use only new materials] covers not only products for local consumption but prevails in connection with all such articles produced, regardless of their point of destination," and, second, because Chicago readers of *The Nation* have been refused lists of the firms which have infracted what the bureau believes to be good business practice.

The bureau appears to be doing a worth-while job, but its work would be more valuable if all its findings were made public.

New York, December 29 Ruth Brindze

Contributors to This Issue

Paul W. Ward will contribute a weekly letter on developments in Washington. He is a regular Washington correspondent of the Baltimore *Sun.*

Walter Millis is the author of "The Road to War" and "The Martial Spirit."

Harold J. Laski is professor of political science at the University of London and active in the British Labor Party. He is the author of "Democracy in Crisis" and "The State in Theory and Practice."

Heywood Broun, columnist and president of the American Newspaper Guild, has recently returned from New Orleans, where he attended the annual convention of American law schools.

Tom Burke is assistant secretary of the Share-Croppers' Union in Alabama.

Gaetano Salvemini, formerly professor of modern history at the University of Florence, was compelled to leave Italy in 1925 because of his opposition to the Fascist dictatorship. He is now at Harvard. He is the author of "The Fascist Dictatorship in Italy" and of other books.

Sidney B. Fay, professor of history at Harvard, is the author of "The Origins of the World War."

Benjamin Rowland, Jr., is a member of the Oriental Department of the Fogg Museum at Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Mark Van Doren is the author of "A Winter Diary." He is *The Nation's* film critic.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Labor and Industry

The San Francisco Waterfront

By OLIVER CARLSON

San Francisco, January 11

"WE'VE got to go along with the young fellows, 'cause they're the ones that run the union now. Lots of us old stiffs would be glad to work for almost anything—to sign up under almost any kind of an agreement. But damn it all, it's the young pups what runs the I. L. A. around here. Look at 'em—young fellows of twenty-five or thereabouts—with lots o' fight and mighty well educated. Say, you'd be surprised at the number of college boys who are longshoring nowadays. They tell us to let them run the union and they'll get us better conditions than we ever had before."

What the grayheaded old stevedore told me on the San Francisco waterfront a few weeks ago was undoubtedly true. I've been down to the docks at Oakland and San Francisco and I've covered the waterfront at San Pedro and Terminal Island. The stevedores—and the sailors too—are *young* men. Not only are they young, but many of them are well educated. They are part of that generation whose potential professional careers as teachers, lawyers, doctors, chemists, or engineers were cut short by the depression. In their desperation to do something, to get a job no matter how lowly, many of these ambitious youngsters turned to the ships and the waterfront.

The shipping companies and the stevedoring concerns were glad to get young, ambitious fellows. College boys had been used successfully in the past to break strikes among the longshoremen and sailors; why couldn't the same thing be done again? So reasoned the bosses, as they tightened down on their men from 1930 to 1932. The immediate effect of this policy was undoubtedly profitable to the waterfront employers. The ex-football players looked upon their jobs as temporary. They had little in common with the semi-literate workers. In fact, there was plenty of bad blood between the two groups. The youngsters knew little—and cared less—about the unions.

But the depression didn't end. More and more college and high-school boys applied for jobs. The employers tightened the screws upon those who had work. Wages dropped. Hours lengthened. Speed-up was in the air.

Within the past two years most of these young men have come to the conclusion that unionization is a good thing. The early days of the NRA saw them pouring into the waterfront organizations. The program of the progressive and left-wing groups within the unions sounded much more sensible to them than did the windy orations of the old-time business agents and officials. So they turned to the left, gave the left wing numerical support, financial support, oral support. Harry Bridges is merely the official spokesman for an enthusiastic army of young, literate, and vocal elements out to establish newer and higher standards for the workers on the waterfront than they have ever had before.

California shipping interests are in a frenzy. They cannot understand what has happened. Almost overnight, so it seems, their ships are organized from bridge to forecastle. The Master-Mates' and Pilots' Union takes care of the officers. The radio men, so essential to modern shipping, are nearly 100 per cent organized. The crews belong to the International Seamen's Union. At the piers are to be found the men in the International Longshoremen's Association, as well as those who carry their cards in the Teamsters' Union. And these unions are developing an unusual degree of cooperation. Ships are tied up at a moment's notice by the unions when they find the owners are trying to break the rules laid down or the contracts entered into. The longshoremen refuse to load or unload ships whose cargo has once been handled by non-union labor or strike-breakers, or whose crew is non-union.

No stone is being left unturned by the anti-labor forces on the Pacific Coast to break the maritime unions. They have already established a huge war chest. During the fall and summer of 1935 they tried to precipitate a strike which they knew would wreck the unions. The good old ladies of San Francisco are being worked into a frenzy of hatred for the "reds on the waterfront who want to destroy our fair city." Harry Bridges is pictured as a sinister figure, incredibly vile.

Speeches made in Moscow last summer at the sessions of the Communist International by Sam Darcy and Earl Browder telling of the amount of Communist influence in the maritime unions and of the great labor struggles soon to develop were given front-page spreads by the California press and emphasized by long and violent editorials calling upon all good citizens to join in stamping out this Communist menace. Such tactics on the part of representatives of the Communist Party have played into the hands of the reactionaries, and have added to the many problems which the militant leadership of the Maritime Federation must face.

William J. Lewis, district president of the I. L. A., and A. H. Peterson, district organizer, are devoting all their time to fighting Bridges and his lieutenants. There is no question in my mind that they have been working hand in hand with the Waterfront Employers' Association. Between them they are prepared to rule or ruin the I. L. A. At this point it may be of interest to report that the Waterfront Employers' Association boasts that it has four men in the San Francisco headquarters of the I. L. A. and another four in the sailors' union. Whether this be so or not, it is a fact that copies of all wires sent to either of these local organizations are delivered to the Waterfront Employers' Association. Time and again the association has announced to the press the contents of confidential union telegrams.

The "news" that the San Francisco papers publish about the waterfront situation is so colored that the Associated Press has had to establish its own service; and it checks carefully every story it gets from the *Chronicle*, the *Examiner*, the *Call-Bulletin*, or the *News*. Waterfront "news," I am told, is at least 50 per cent fake. It is part of the build-up made use of by a hostile press to turn the rest of the population against the waterfront employees.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Meanwhile, a new "labor" paper has appeared on the streets of the Bay cities. It is called the *California Federationist* and is the personal property of one or more of the conservative labor leaders. The *Federationist* is as bitter as the daily press in its attacks upon the radicals in the waterfront unions. Rumor has it that the money for this paper was put up by none other than William Randolph Hearst. At any rate, Allen T. Baum—who is not a member of the San Francisco chapter of the Newspaper Guild—is editing the sheet. Baum is the former labor editor of Hearst's San Francisco *Examiner*.

Some time ago a streamer headline across a page of the San Francisco *Bulletin* announced, "Vigilante Dead Line Nears!" A two-column boxed editorial on the front page let it be known that vigilante efforts would be resorted to unless peace could be established on the waterfront. "Peace," of course, meant a complete knuckling under by the unions.

An Open Letter to Rex Tugwell

[*The Rural Resettlement Division of the Resettlement Administration, of which Rexford Tugwell is administrator, is engaged in rehabilitating some 290,000 farm families taken from the relief rolls in the spring and summer of 1934. The program is designed to help these families become self-sustaining. The Resettlement Administration makes small loans directly to the "rehabilitant," who purchases his goods, however, according to a budget made for him by the local representative. The following letter, which we urge upon the attention of Mr. Tugwell, relates the experience of one of these families in Alabama. Mr. Burke is assistant secretary of the Share-Croppers' Union.*—Editors The Nation.]

Birmingham, Alabama

DEAR Mr. Tugwell: I have just visited Mrs. Pierce White, who lives on a rehabilitation farm near Lafayette in Chambers County. Mrs. White and her four little girls had a very unhappy Christmas this year, not because they were starving on the farm—they were hardened to that—but because Mr. White had been sent to jail. I promised Mrs. White that the Share-Croppers' Union would do everything it could for her husband and family, and that is why I am writing this letter.

The local representative of the Resettlement Administration in Chambers County is Vernon Jennings, a small landowner. He is known as the field foreman. You have perhaps read about him in your special investigator's report on Chambers County.

You remember that the Rehabilitation Administration stopped advancing money for food last August and many of the people got in a pretty bad fix. Mr. White took a couple of hundred pounds of his seed cotton and sold it in order to buy food for his family. Mr. Jennings found out about it and had Mr. White arrested. When Mr. White's brother, Walton, tried to get signers for a bail bond for Pierce, he found that Mr. Jennings was going around telling everyone not to sign the bond. Of course, only the landlords are eligible to sign a bail bond and they are friends of Mr. Jennings. To cut it short, Mr. White was held in jail until his trial and then was convicted and sent to jail for six months. Pierce White's brother Walton was arrested, too, because he had hauled the cotton. However, he appealed his case and he will be free until the spring-term court.

Pierce White has been in jail for two and a half months now, just for selling about 200 pounds of his own seed cotton. But this isn't all. After Pierce went to jail Mr. Jennings came out and took the steer (the work animal), the fertilizer distributor, the plow stock and tools, the scooter, the scrapes, and the mow boards and gear. Then Mr. Jennings took the three bales of cotton they had made and their AAA rental and parity checks; the Whites didn't get a penny out of this. A little later Mr. Jennings came and asked Mrs. White if she would need the syrup, corn, and sweet potatoes. She said she would because she had nothing else for the winter except a cow that only gave half a gallon of milk a day.

To tell you the truth, Mr. Tugwell, Mrs. White doesn't understand just how she stands because she has not received any accounting of what they were given by the government, what they owed the government, or how the government was to get it back. Mr. White must have figured that the cotton was his; so he sold a little (I haven't talked to him about it). Also the Whites believe that they had paid for the things that Mr. Jennings took away from them. You see, the cotton Mr. Jennings collected must have brought at least $150; this with the rental and parity checks would surely have paid almost all of their debt to the government. Now, Mr. Jennings has not given them any account of what they owe or any receipts for what they paid. He may have given an accounting to the Resettlement administration, but as far as the Whites are concerned, the bookkeeping system is just like the landlord's system. Mr. Jennings just takes everything and says it is for "indebtedness."

Mrs. White only got six gallons of syrup, about ten bushels of sweet potatoes, and about fifty bushels of corn, and that is all she has for the winter, along with a little milk. It is a pretty terrible diet for her little girls—the oldest is five and the youngest is four months old.

When I last saw Mrs. White she was very worried about something else, too. Mr. Paul Martin, the federal land agent, had ordered her to move. Mr. White signed the rehabilitation contract for three years, and it seems as if Mr. Jennings should be looking out for a place for the family, but he isn't.

I remember Mr. R. K. Greene, the Alabama Rehabilitation Director, saying that they could not let these rehabilitated farmers get a better living than the share-croppers because all the croppers would want to be rehabilitation farmers. Well, Mr. Greene did a 100 per cent job, and there is not a rehabilitation farmer in these parts who is getting along as well as the share-croppers.

And much as Mrs. White needs help, all the other rehabilitation farmers are in almost as bad a fix. Mr. Jennings has collected almost everything they raised and intercepted the rental and parity checks and cut off the food advances; so you can see that they are in a terrible fix. Many of the rehabilitation farmers are being told to move, and Mr. Jennings isn't paying any attention to it and is letting the landlords run them off the land.

Mrs. White lives on Route 1 out of Lafayette, in case you want to get in touch with her. Tom Burke

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Books and Drama

Sweet Swan of Hollywood

By JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

ACCORDING to the *New Yorker,* which quotes a San Francisco paper, one Charles Kenyon has been asking himself whether or not Shakespeare could break into the movies if he were alive and unknown today. It seems that Mr. Kenyon made the scenario for "A Midsummer Night's Dream" (recently presented with considerable éclat to the Dramatic Museum of Columbia University by Max Reinhardt), and it seems, further, that he can answer his own question without equivocation. "Kenyon believes that the Bard's uncanny insight into human nature, his genius for putting words together, and, most of all, his infinite and daring imagination would win him immediate entrance into filmdom."

Whether this is intended as a tribute to Hollywood or, as seems more probable, a graceful compliment to Shakespeare is not quite clear. In either event, however, it seems almost too complete for further comment. The mind is immediately filled with the pleasing picture of the "Bard" clearing at one bound the chasm between deer-stealing and a contract in this best of all possible Californias. Mr. Goldwyn hands him a golden pen. The camera rolls forward on a "dolly" until it reveals in close-up Mr. Shakespeare's hand signing his name in one of the seventeen recorded spellings. Thanks to the invention of the optical printer, the nine Muses are seen superimposed in wraith-like form, casting significant glances at one another. Fade.

Unfortunately, however, Shakespeare is not alive and unknown today. Hollywood, being deprived of the opportunity to recognize him first, is fain to content itself with tributes like those of Mr. Kenyon and with the production of cinematographic versions of works which the author would himself have composed somewhat differently if he had had the camera in mind. According to an interesting article published in the *Yale Review* by Richard Watts, sapient commentator on the movies for the *Herald Tribune,* the magnates are only waiting to see how "A Midsummer Night's Dream" turns out before deciding to raid the collected works, and accordingly the fate of Shakespeare is even now hanging in the balance—of the box-office books.

Like most of the more restrained commentators, Mr. Watts is far from believing "A Midsummer Night's Dream" wholly successful from the artistic standpoint. Several of the more important actors were easier on the eye than on the ear and seemed little at home with a certain aspect of the Shakespearean drama which has hitherto been considered of considerable importance, namely, its words. Mr. Watts believes, however, that there is nothing inevitable or incorrigible about the deficiencies in this most elaborate of all attempts to adapt Shakespeare to the screen, and professes to believe that the plays are, as a matter of fact, peculiarly adapted to the movies.

> The shifting backgrounds and the numerous scenes in the Shakespearean dramas, as well as the very nature of the tales, make them admirable cinema material. Always the screen, at its best, has had a curiously Elizabethan, if not Shakespearean, quality about it. . . . At the same time, there is no denying that numerous objections have been and will be raised against the filming of Shakespeare. . . . For example, a number of people have objected to the current version of "A Midsummer Night's Dream," not because of any lack of imagination in the camera work and production—a quite possible cause for complaint—but because the camera did its work too well. The theory was that since the words of Shakespeare created a vision of fairyland that approached perfection, any endeavor to recreate that moonstruck world by mechanical artifice was an intrusion and a sacrilege. Since Shakespeare wrote . . . for the stage, and the stage, even in its simplest forms, cannot escape its visual elements, it seems to me that any such objection should go the whole way and resent the presence of actors as well as of camera work.

Mr. Watts's arguments are interesting, and on paper they look well, but there lies in the second of his points a difficulty which, so it seems to me, he has tended to overlook. Is Shakespeare really better when produced with all possible elaboration and supplemented by the physical recreation of the scenes which he suggests? Undoubtedly the plays do suggest elaborate pictures. Moreover, the evidence seems to indicate that Shakespeare himself tended to use to the full all the resources of the Elizabethan stage for the production of spectacular effects. If that stage had been mechanically more resourceful, he would probably have depended upon spectacle much more than he did, and in view of that fact it might seem that Hollywood could advantageously confer upon him the benefits of its technical resources—just as stage producers of the Irving-Tree tradition conferred (unfortunately with disastrous results) the supposed benefits of the Victorian picture stage. The fact remains, however, that Shakespeare did *not* have a theater capable of elaborate spectacle, and that its limitations had results which one may well hesitate to regret. They threw him back upon the necessity of creating the illusion with words; he was compelled to suggest or to describe what he could not present; and the consensus of opinion is that he managed to make out very well indeed.

Of course one may attempt to realize by visual means also what he realized through imagination, but to suppose that the addition of this secondary appeal to the eye obviously increases the richness of the whole is to misconceive the whole nature of artistic effectiveness. Art works within limitations and reveals itself, in part at least, through its success in achieving its results in their despite. To make much out of little, to make the part seem more vivid and more real than the whole, to suggest more vividly than it can present, is an important part of its secret. And the lack of limitations, the ability to do everything and show everything, is one of the reasons why the movies have never found it necessary to develop a real artistic method. There is no need to be subtle when you can actually present.

Consider a familiar passage from Shakespeare, the speech of Banquo before the gate of Macbeth's castle:

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This guest of summer
The temple-haunting martlet, does approve
By his lov'd masonry that the heaven's breath
Smells wooingly here; no jetty, friez,
Buttresss, nor coign of vantage, but this bird
Hath made his pendent bed and procreant cradle.

Obviously the speech would never have been written if Shakespeare had actually envisaged performance before a completely realized castle with "temple-haunting" martlets flitting about like the gigantic moth which Harpo Marx raises from the whiskers of the sleeping aviator. As a matter of fact, it is one of those directly descriptive passages which are not wholly effective from the dramatic standpoint because they are so obviously put there to supply a deficiency which the spectator is reminded of. But that is not the point. The point is that if we are to have that speech we do not want representation also. If the pendent beds and procreant cradles were actually there, the effect of the speech would not be greater but less, because we should be divided in our attention and trying to appreciate the same picture twice. Art does not love duplication of effort. It does not do in one way what it has already done in another, for, if it does, the result is to deprive it of that suggestion of power which comes from achieving an effect with the utmost economy of means. To say this is not to put oneself in the position of being logically compelled to "go the whole way and resent the presence of actors, as well as of camera work." Shakespeare wrote in a manner which presupposed the effects contributed by the actors, but he did not write as he would have done had he also presupposed the aid of "camera work." In the planned economy of his dramatic microcosms actors had a place because actors would be at work during that ultimate realization upon the stage which was always in his mind. If they had not had such a place, he would have been —as he certainly was not—a mere closet dramatist. But at the same time he was equally careful to supply in the text the deficiencies which existed in available methods of staging. If you are going to build Macbeth's castle complete (with practical martlets), you had better leave Banquo's speech out.

That brings us to the real point, which is that a genuinely successful translation of Shakespeare to the screen implies far more drastic transmogrification than "A Midsummer Night's Dream" attempts. Unfortunately, of course, it is not all so simple as the omission of a descriptive passage which one has decided to realize pictorially. It would involve also, at every point in the play, an attempt to determine which of the effects realizable in picture or action make necessary the modification of text or order of events. Nothing is gained by simply adding spectacle or supplementary scenes to Shakespeare's text. The problem is to create in terms of the cinema something equivalent to that which he created in terms of the Elizabethan theater. Whether or not that would be worth doing at all is a separate question. Perhaps it would be only to discover that even the cinema is less flexible and less magical than the English language. But to do it as well as it might be done would require a more ruthless irreverence toward a sacred text than Hollywood, torn between its arrogance and its sense of inferiority, can summon at the present moment. Granted the boldness to commit the necessary sacrilege, there would still, of course, be required the necessary skill. But perhaps the courage to profane, not timidly but recklessly, will have to come first.

Salvemini on Seldes

Sawdust Caesar. By George Seldes. Harper and Brothers. $3.

NO other man in power has ever succeeded to the same extent as Mussolini in controlling not only the press of his own country but numerous foreign papers as well. The correspondents of the foreign papers living in Rome are not channels of independent information but merely zealous mouthpieces of Fascist propaganda. There are few newspapers outside Italy which do not have on their editorial staff an "expert" on Italian affairs who concocts Italian news items according to Fascist interpretation, puts them on the front page when they do honor to Mussolini, suppresses them or buries them where nobody will find them when they might make a bad impression, adorns them with appropriate headlines which may even say just the opposite of the news item itself, annuls the effect of one piece of information with another, in short, puts at the service of Fascism all those manipulations of news, words, and phrases with which newspapers slowly educate their public to repeat certain slogans as truths above discussion.

In 1928 the Italian government established in Italy a "Committee for Propaganda Abroad." "This committee," announced the editors of *Industrial and Labor Information,* of the International Labor Office (July 23, 1928, p. 23), "will furnish persons abroad with learned and popular publications on the development of the movement." In March, 1929, there was begun the publication of a bulletin in French, English, German, and Spanish bearing the title, in French, *Feuilles d'Information Corporatives,* for the use of foreign students. In 1933, 100,000 copies of this publication were circulated all over the world. The learning of many "experts" who write about Italy without knowing anything about it is derived from that bulletin. All the experts have to do is to garnish the "dope" handed out by the bulletin with their own fancies.

If foreign writers want to come to Italy to "get the atmosphere," and have no money or do not like to spend their money, the Italian government pays their expenses. When the books which result from such visits are deemed suitable, the government has them translated into many languages and buys thousands of copies for distribution among "experts." In this way, the "unbiased" author is assured large royalties.

Thus an army of writers, both male and female, of every conceivable caliber, floods the world with books, articles, lectures, interviews, open letters, and what not, on the subject of Fascism. Everywhere the public mind is the victim of misinformation. The enthusiasm of the gullible foreigner is substituted for the opinion of the muzzled Italian subject. The Fascist experiment is falsified. The material and moral sufferings of the Italian people do not serve to enlighten other peoples.

The danger of this mystification is far greater for other countries than is generally believed. Very few suspect that by swallowing and spreading false information about Italian Fascism they are helping to discredit free institutions in their own countries. When you have convinced your fellows that Mussolini has made Italy happy—Italy which was so unhappy under the pre-Fascist regime—what will prevent them from thinking that the same medicine which has accomplished miracles in Italy deserves to be tried in your country too?

This book of George Seldes's will be an efficacious antidote for the poison of this propaganda. It is the best comprehensive work on Fascist Italy which thus far has been published in the English language. It is to be hoped that it will be widely read and meditated upon.

In gathering his material and in writing his book Seldes

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

has had before his eyes those newspapermen and experts who for the last ten years have been flooding the English-speaking world with lies. In many instances he gives not only the correct version on the basis of the most reliable evidence, but also the false version which was circulated. The book, therefore, is doubly useful in that it gives at the same time the account of the facts and the account of the lies. The contrast is often revolting.

Having had experience in this kind of work and knowing the enormous difficulties which it presents, I do not wonder at the inaccuracies which I have come on here and there. They are especially numerous when Seldes recounts Mussolini's pre-Fascist life. The official biography of the Duce written by Signora Sarfatti has accumulated veritable mountains of lies. To demolish them it would be necessary to do a more prodigious deed than that which Hercules performed when he swept the Augean stables. I know a young American of Italian extraction, Dr. Megaro, who has applied himself for years to this work with surprising results, and I hope that he will sometime publish the results of his researches. If Seldes had had to do a similar amount of work for all the parts of his subject, a century of life would not have been enough for him.

On one point only I preserve a grudge against Seldes. I wish that he had cited his sources with greater care. Often in reading this well-informed book I have come across precious bits of news which were unknown to me and which have all the marks of authenticity, but their source is not indicated.

GAETANO SALVEMINI

Wilson and Neutrality

American Neutrality, 1914-1917. By Charles Seymour. Yale University Press. $2.

Woodrow Wilson: Life and Letters. Volume V. *Neutrality, 1914-1915.* By Ray Stannard Baker. Doubleday, Doran and Company. $4.

WHY did the United States abandon neutrality? C. H. Grattan, Walter Millis, and Senator Nye give the impression that it was the selfish influence of Wall Street bankers, munitions makers, Allied propaganda, Sir Edward Grey's cunning, and so forth. Professor Seymour in his new volume reiterates that it was the German submarine campaign. Mr. Baker cannot be called as a final witness, because his volume goes only to the end of 1915, when Wilson was still keeping us out of war.

In the reviewer's opinion, although all these factors had an influence, Professor Seymour is much nearer the truth in his view; he may emphasize too exclusively the submarine, nevertheless it was the main and final cause of our participation. The other group seem to assume that the factors which they emphasize—and which were very influential with Lansing, McAdoo, Page, and public opinion generally—determined the policy of the United States. But Mr. Baker, and still more Professor Seymour, makes it clear that the person who really determined American policy was President Wilson himself; that he was a singularly strong and self-reliant leader; that when his advisers or pro-Ally partisans tried to urge materialistic motives and persuade him to join the Allies, their efforts had exactly the opposite effect. Lansing's "Memoirs" are significant on this point—and he had reason to know. All through his book he stresses Wilson's independence, his tendency "to oppose any action urged by the press or by partisans. . . . The idea of being induced to act under the pressure of public demand was always distasteful to the President and aroused in him a spirit of resistance." One of the chief results of Page's pro-English arguments, according to Lansing, was "to

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN

Literary Fellowships

FOR 1936

Two Literary Fellowships of $1,000 each (exclusive of subsequent royalties) are offered to writers of promise who need financial aid to complete some literary work.

These fellowships will be given to the writers who submit, before April 1st, the most meritorious projects for books (either fiction or non-fiction) that they wish to write. For details and application blanks, address Houghton Mifflin Company, 2 Park St., Boston.

A Book You Should Read

The GLANDS OF LIFE

By HERMAN H. RUBIN, M.D.

How the Ductless Glands regulate our Mental, Physical and Sexual Health, Personality and Behavior. The vital role they play in our daily life and their contribution to successful living.

Vitality, Sexual Virility, Senility, Rejuvenation and many other important subjects are presented in clear, direct, non-technical language.

Packed with authoritative information, yet as readable as a novel.

Price $1.50 Postage 15c extra

B. B. BELLAIRE, PUBLISHER
489 Fifth Avenue, N. Y. Department N

Soviet News STRAIGHT from the Source!
Subscribe to
SOVIET PERIODICALS
in Russian, English, French, German, and other languages.
Sole importers from U. S. S. R. of new books, rare books, dictionaries, grammars, maps, art publications, reproductions, etc.
Catalogs and information furnished on request.
BOOKNIGA CORP.
Dept. N22 255 Fifth Ave. New York City

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

make the President more than ever irritated against the British. . . . If he had read aright the character of the President, Mr. Page would have avoided taking such a course because it was the one way of arousing Mr. Wilson's spirit of obstinacy." The fact that President Wilson occasionally changed his mind in accordance with arguments pressed upon him, as when he consented to loans to the Allies in October, 1915, after discountenancing them for fourteen months, does not invalidate the substantial truth of the fact that he was independent of pressure groups, that he determined American policy with the two aims of keeping out of war and of mediating peace, and that it was the German submarine which eventually thwarted these aims. It may well be argued that, in the future, under a weaker President who would be more subject to pressure, materialistic influences might easily involve us. But the facts of 1914-17 should not be misinterpreted in order to support the argument.

Professor Seymour also examines carefully the German side of the evidence. The sale of American munitions to the Allies, of which we have been made so conscious lately by Senator Nye, and which was greatly resented by Germany, was not, however, the main thing aimed at in the submarine campaign; the primary purpose was the destruction of English shipping and cargo space, which was expected to bring England to her knees by cutting off her food, raw materials, and revenue from foreign trade. The Germans were perfectly aware that unrestricted submarine warfare would be the decisive factor which would certainly bring the United States into the war, but the military authorities reckoned that the quick crushing of England was more important.

Turning to Mr. Baker's meticulous account of President Wilson during the first year and a half of the war, one finds less that is new than one had hoped. But one is deeply impressed with the terrible weight of the burdens he had to bear. Grief-stricken by the death of his wife just at the moment the European conflagration began, hampered in carrying forward his cherished program of domestic reconstruction but determined not to let it be disrupted by the European war, he was assailed by ever-increasing difficulties caused by the disregard of American rights by both the Allies and the Germans. After describing to a friend the multifarious duties of a typical day, the President ended saying, "I fall into bed so tired I cannot think." Nevertheless, by daily golf and long restful drives about Washington he kept himself cheerful, fit, and full of high courage.

Bryan is put in a much more favorable light by Mr. Baker than by most earlier writers. Bryan's proposals for bringing the belligerents together to discuss peace terms was "a broad, sound thought—with constructive ideas which Wilson was afterward to profit by." If they had been tried in the summer of 1915, before the United States capitulated to England in regard to the Declaration of London and when it still possessed the power of an embargo on munitions as a diplomatic weapon, "something might possibly have been accomplished." But knowing as we do now the temper of the Germans at this time, we can be certain that they would never have conceded terms which the Allies would have been willing to accept. Even Mr. Baker seems to have realized this, for he says later of Wilson's refusal to adopt the plan so urgently advocated by his Secretary of State, "Probably everything would have failed, but not everything was tried." In championing Bryan, Mr. Baker takes more than a score of sarcastic digs at Colonel House, which are hardly justified.

As to the future, Mr. Baker says "we are still involved [1935] in world economic and financial relationships which make political isolation an unreal concept, and which will prevent the United States from keeping out of any important conflict in the future." He feels this so strongly that he repeats it in substance in three other passages, adding, however, in one, "with Great Britain or any other belligerent in control of the sea," and in another, "unless we are prepared for the self-discipline and the economic losses resulting from embargoes and other restrictions." Professor Seymour, with a wise *caveat* against placing too much confidence in alleged historical analogies, agrees that it is going to be terribly difficult for us to stay out of another major war, but is doubtful about the wisdom of automatic isolationist measures for mandatory embargoes announced beforehand. The best hope of staying out of war is to take steps in cooperation with other states to prevent war from breaking out. Both books are obviously of the highest importance to anyone who wants to clarify his mind about the present Congressional neutrality proposals and their historical background.

SIDNEY B. FAY

Hokusai

Hokusai. By Gustav Eckstein. Harper and Brothers. $2.50.

THROUGH an intimate study of the prints and drawings by his hero and through even closer observation of the Japanese themselves, Dr. Eckstein, in his dramatized life of Hokusai, has caught the full nostalgic savor of the era before the Western penetration of Japan. As a result of that Westernization we today are witnesses to the spectacle of Japan dying in the embrace of industrialism. Japan sends out her soul in ill-starred international adventure and cannot call it back. Riding through Tokyo in the stabbing glare of the Neon signs on the Ginza, we are scarcely conscious that there ever was on this spot such a town as Yedo—a name that survives only in the musty index of the British Museum Reading Room. In his "Hokusai," Dr. Eckstein gives us the personality of the great print-maker and, more than that, the personality of Yedo in the time in which he lived. The master of Ukiyo-ye is outlined against the very background from which his drawings took form—during that little space in time when Japan drew apart from change. The characters that move in the play are the same that have their places in Hokusai's prints: the vendors of *tofu* and *soba,* the actors and samurai, the wan beauties of the geisha house, even the professional story-teller, who survives today as the explainer of foreign talkies in the cinema palaces of Tokyo.

The author has chosen the episodic form for his presentation. In the fourteen scenes of the play we follow Hokusai from the time he was an ecstatic adolescent at a performance of the forty-seventh Ronin until his death against a background of the cone of Fuji. Dramatically the play does not work up to any climax, nor does its tempo vary notably throughout the scenes from Hokusai's life. Its success depends on the sheer effectiveness of the individual scenes—as laconic and exquisite in arrangement as the master's prints themselves. One remembers particularly the magnificent tongue-in-cheek bravado of Hokusai's virtuoso performance before the Shogun. In this episode the Shogun speaks what might well be an epitaph for the whole Tokugawa dictatorship: "Nothing in a Shogun's reign is more important than what his artists leave behind them." The loveliest scene of all is perhaps that of the old artist staring out into the rain, alone in the green darkness; the lines have all the melancholy, evocative quality of *haiku.*

Dr. Eckstein's penetration under the surface of Japanese life is always astonishing. Not only is his portrait of Hokusai himself a striking piece of work, but all the little niceties of observation—the subservient and exquisite entrances of the women, the etiquette of greeting, marrying, and dying, and of drinking tea—arouse the enthusiasm of a reviewer who shares the author's feeling for Japan. Through the episodes of the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

play we follow the unfolding of Hokusai's artistic personality, and it is to Dr. Eckstein's credit that we are never once led to think of Hokusai as a self-conscious subjective artist in the Western sense but rather as a gifted master of his craft. A craftsman just as much as his foster-father, the maker of mirrors, it was Hokusai's trade to record the sights and marvels within bow-shot of the River Sumida, to capture Fuji's moods, and rival Utamaro in portraying the darlings of the Yoshiwara. Perhaps the explanation lies in that, in a life devoted to picturing the "floating world," Hokusai realized that "at bottom reality is nothing and nothing is reality." Hokusai understood this, and so does Dr. Eckstein, another honest craftsman.

BENJAMIN ROWLAND, JR.

A Dedicated Man

Letters to Harriet. By William Vaughn Moody. Edited, with Introduction and Conclusion, by Percy MacKaye. Houghton Mifflin Company. $3.50.

AS editor of these letters Mr. MacKaye makes them tell a story which they were not written to tell, and which, in so far as they do tell it, is a less interesting story than Mr. MacKaye believes. It is the story of several persons who during the first decade of the present century set out self-consciously to produce an American poetic drama—to arrive at "Stratford and Weimar by route of Medicine Hat and Kalamazoo." They were in the habit of referring to themselves as "our little group," to their activity as a "crusade," and to their organization as a "phalanx." One of them wrote to Mr. MacKaye in 1905 begging him to "tell me of things dramatic and poetic, and what you are doing, and what I *ought* to be doing, and what hope—or fear—there is for all of us who are growing pale and thin watching for signs of American drama." And Moody himself wrote to Mr. MacKaye in 1904: "I am heart and soul dedicated to the conviction that modern life can be presented on the stage in the poetic mediums, and adequately presented only in that way." The failure of the story to be interesting now is not at all because we have ceased to consider the possibilities of poetic drama; indeed, such possibilities are the theme of a lively criticism at the moment, both in England and in America. Rather it is because these people worked in a hopelessly literary way—"dedicating" themselves in phrases and attitudes that could never have had anything to do with a living theater, and hating commercialism with the kind of holy air which results in the composition not of better plays but merely of different ones.

At any rate the story gets told in the voluminous introduction, conclusion, and notes to this book; and Mr. MacKaye does contrive to leave on record a good deal of information which literary historians will enjoy concerning the dramatic careers of Moody and himself, Edwin Arlington Robinson, Josephine Preston Peabody, and Ridgely Torrence. Nor is the story entirely irrelevant to one theme which Moody pursues throughout his letters to the woman, Mrs. Harriet Brainard, who became his wife a year before he died in 1910. This is the theme of his dedication to the poetic art. For he thought of himself first and last as a poetic artist, and his letters to his best friend are full of reports on the progress he is making, on the state of his mind and imagination at given moments, and on the processes which he discovers taking place inside his heart and soul. These reports, made by an extremely intelligent, attractive, and honest man, are nevertheless unconvincing. I fancy that if we had only them to go by we should know that Moody had not been a first-rate poet, as in fact he was not. His poems say so no less clearly than these introspective passages wherein he somehow never quite strikes a plausible

THEATRES

"I was greatly impressed by **'PARADISE LOST'**, so much so that I have been thinking of it ever since. It is crowded with illuminating material. It should cause millions to think and even if it did not do that it should still be recommended as thrilling entertainment."
—*Theodore Dreiser*

'Paradise Lost'

By Clifford Odets

LONGACRE THEA. W. 48th St. Eves. 8:40. Mats. Wed. & Sat. 2:40

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH says

At Home Abroad. Winter Garden. Beatrice Lillie, Ethel Waters, and others, in one of the two best musical shows of the year. No plot but good fun.

Boy Meets Girl. Cort Theater. Rough and ready satire on Hollywood, but probably the funniest thing of its kind since "Once in a Lifetime."

Dead End. Belasco Theater. A play about gangsters in the making on an East River waterfront. Superbly acted by a group of boys. More a good show than a great drama, but a very good show indeed.

First Lady. Music Box. Comedy hit about a feminine feud in Washington society. Jane Cowl and Lily Cahill puncture one another with sharp implements in the forging of which George Kaufman had a hand.

Jubilee. Imperial Theater. Competes with "At Home Abroad" for first place among the musical shows. Remarkable for its décor, which is not only splendid but in unusually good taste.

Jumbo. Hippodrome. Paul Whiteman, Jimmy Durante, and a remarkable clown named A. Robbins surrounded by acrobats and animals. Literally better than a circus.

Let Freedom Ring. Civic Repertory Theater. A second chance for this drama of a strike in a Southern mill. I found it hard going, but it has been highly praised.

Libel. Henry Miller Theater. Exciting English court-room play. Surprisingly probable for this sort of thing and superbly acted.

Mid-West. Booth Theater. Reviewed this week.

Paradise Lost. Longacre Theater. Clifford Odets' complicated picture of a family composed exclusively of pathological futilitarians. He calls it a picture of the middle class but it strikes me as somewhat less than typical.

Pride and Prejudice. Plymouth Theater. Amazingly successful adaption, brilliantly staged and acted. It gave me more pleasure than any other play of the season.

Victoria Regina. Broadhurst Theater. Delightful series of scenes from Laurence Housman's drama stunningly acted by Helen Hayes and others. Fairer to the matron queen than Strachey but funny nevertheless and charming besides.

Winterset. Martin Beck Theater. Maxwell Anderson's surprisingly successful attempt to write a poetic play on a modern theme. Bold, original, and engrossing.

The Nation *and* Readers Digest

for only $6 *Value $8*

Subscriptions may be new or renewal and may be mailed to different addresses. Payment may be made within thirty days—but order at once.

1-22-36

The Nation 20 Vesey Street New York City

Send The Nation and Reader's Digest as indicated below. ☐ I enclose my check for $6.00 OR ☐ I will pay in thirty days.

Name _____

Address _____

When writing to advertisers please mention **The Nation**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

balance between self-consciousness and its opposite. He knows both too little and too much about the mind of the poet; too little, or he could say more, and too much, or he would say less. He manages in the same breath to be modest and embarrassing, and to be tragic without realizing it. For it is surely tragic that intelligence, integrity, and a great personal decency should not be enough to make a poet out of a man who wants very badly to be one. God knows what is needed in addition, but whatever it is Moody did not have it.

In his poems, that is. He has it in these letters, which are not only his best work but among the best things of their kind in American literature. The truth comes out clearly enough in a comparison between the following lines of prose, written to Mrs. Brainard from Crete in 1902, and the poem called "The Second Coming," written in New York two years later:

> The sailors were lying about asleep in the fierce sun —except one, who had heaved his boat on her side and was calking her. By him stood a man dressed in a long dark robe of coarse stuff, bareheaded, talking earnestly to the stooping sailor. I took him for a Greek priest, by reason of his long hair and spiritual profile. There was something in the spare frame of the man, the slight stoop of the shoulders, and the calm intensity of the attitude, which made my heart stop beating. Presently he turned to look at me, and it was indeed He. This has happened to me twice now—once before at Sorrento seven years ago.

Moody seems not to have understood that this *was* the poem, and that the 120 lines which he lavished on the incident were doomed to mediocrity for the simple reason that the incident had been closed—both in his mind and in the words which already so perfectly contained it. But no such comparison is needed to establish our point. The genius which is lacking in the poems is abundantly present in the letters, where a high and holy seriousness lies down naturally with the most charming, the most unsubduable wit; where a magnificent rhetoric, suitable for the landscapes of Greece and Arizona, is always correcting itself with warm-hearted humor and an eye to human detail; and where a sustained note of worship—literally worship—for Mrs. Brainard is never marred by failure to remember that she too is capable of comedy—that she is, indeed, "my gay and disquieting and ever incalculable companion, upon whose shifting moods I have learned to build from hour to hour my house of life." As a collection of letters the book is brilliant and beautiful; as a love story it brings home to us one of the most heroic and honorable and amusing of American men.

MARK VAN DOREN

Drama

Necktie Party

A FEW years ago James Hagan wrote the sentimental and elegiac comedy "One Sunday Afternoon." Now he has brought what is obviously the same temperament and attitude to bear upon the somewhat less suitable material of a contemporary tragedy called "Mid-West," which has been set and acted with considerable skill at the Booth Theater. Mr. Hagan's admiration for the simple virtues, his sympathetic understanding of plain, uncomplicated people, and his tinge of cracker-box philosophy serve him well when he deals with the ordinary perplexities of ordinary people, but they seem hardly adequate to deal with some of the grimmer and uglier aspects of the story he has now undertaken to tell. They were sufficient to illuminate with a soft and pleasing light a tale of quiet affections in a placid village; they are not sufficient to enable him to see very deeply into an acute social problem or to comment very significantly upon a series of incidents which reach their climax in a lynching.

The action of the piece takes place before a Grant Wooden house set somewhere in the midst of the drought-stricken farm lands. The house is inhabited by a sturdy farmer and his wife whose patience, piety, and fortitude are of the hearty Midwestern, rather than of the ascetic New England, variety; and the play is at its best when it is representing such people with a slightly softened realism. But their troubles are not confined to the ordinary hardships of the farm plus the withering blight of the drought. A son whom they have sacrificed themselves to educate returns home a very callow Communist, plays into the hands of two wandering agitators, works up a strike among the farm hands, and is finally lynched for his pains by a party of irate neighbors. Though the parents have no sympathy for his convictions and have themselves suffered from his activities, they voluntarily isolate themselves from the community which has stained itself with such a crime, and the curtain falls upon the beginning of a rain—in itself enough to inspire in them that modest hopefulness which is sufficient for people like them to go on.

As long as the author confines himself to the representation of events from the point of view of his characters he is often both moving and convincing. In their quieter moments the people are real, and the play has many of the elements of a successful genre study. But though Mr. Hagan has obviously made some effort to do so, he cannot refrain from a recurrent impulse to editorialize, and when he yields he not only reveals very clearly the painful inadequacy of his philosophy to deal with the ugly situation involved, but at the same time loses his grip on verisimilitude. His group of striking farm hands intrude upon the realistic scene like some creatures out of a Hearst cartoon, and at the same time the farmer is surprisingly transmogrified into a St. George in overalls. Thus Mr. Hagan's infantile rightism has much the same effect as the—well, over-simple—leftism of some of the Fourteenth Street playwrights. Life goes out of the window when the all-too-final and comprehensive moral comes in from the wings. The verisimilitude of drama is sacrificed to the didacticism of the fable, and not all the very skilful acting (especially of Jean Adair as the farm wife and of Curtis Cooksey as the husband) can save it.

As the curtain descended upon the first act of the performance I saw, a fist fight broke out between a gentleman who applauded from the front row and a gentleman who hissed from the row just behind. Several persons to whom I mentioned the incident all replied in almost the same words: "That's fine. We need more of that in the American theater." There is, I am afraid, hardly space to discuss the question here, but I am a bit surprised that the attitude should be taken so much for granted. I assume that art should be moving. I assume even that at its best it is very likely to arouse strong differences of opinion, sometimes over aesthetic and sometimes over moral or social questions. But I am not sure that the kind of effect which, at its best, it strives to produce is the kind which reveals itself in fisticuffs. At the Abbey Theater, I know, there was long a tendency to measure the worth of a play by the number of bloody noses which could be counted in the audience after the curtain had gone down. But I had supposed that at least a considerable number of people assumed that art operated upon a somewhat different plane of emotions, and that the tension it generated was to be released in some more complex way. Aristotle said it was to be purged through pity and terror, and though I have never been sure exactly what that means, it doesn't mean through a "punch on the nose."

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED